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To the 124 Veterans who have been featured as our Valley Patriots of the Month and to John Lenotte of the American Legion, as well to the men and women who serve in our local police and fire departments: Your service and sacrifice protects our most sacred God-given right, our right of free speech and a free press! THANK YOU!

~Tom, Chuck, and Ralph

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Three Welcome Additions to our Stacked Lineup of Talent

As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, we are happy to announce some exciting additions to our Valley Patriot lineup, starting with former Eagle Tribune publisher Al Getler.

Yes, that's what we said ... Al Getler.

Given that publisher Tom Duggan has been somewhat abrasive in his criticism of Getler's reign at the Tribune over the years, we were pretty convinced that the captain of our ship had lost his marbles when he said he wanted to try and convince Getler to join The Valley Patriot family. So you can imagine how stunned we were when he reported back months later that Getler had agreed to write a column in the pages of this newspaper.

The possibilities that arise from Getler's addition to our vast network are endless. We find it encouraging for our next ten years that Duggan and Getler have put

aside past differences and came to an agreement for the benefit of our readers. The fact is, both men care deeply about free speech, a free press, open access to government, and most importantly, giving you unique news and views about the issues that shape our culture.

We welcome Mr. Getler with open arms to write whatever he wants, about whomever he wants, without restriction. Al Getler's fist column is on page 7 of this edition.

The mission of this newspaper is and has always been to allow OTHERS access to a vehicle to freely express their views the way they see fit, whether they be friend or foe ... or even former foe. The very nature of what we do here is to encourage dissent and a free flow of ideas, so that our readers can decide what to believe, rather than us telling you what to believe by excluding certain views.

We are looking forward to Mr. Getler wielding his pen with absolute freedom and letting the chips fall where they may, even if they land on us. We are also looking forward to him bringing his ventriloquist dummies to our Tenth Anniversary BASH on March 21st to entertain the crowd and skewer the locals however he sees fit.

Another new addition to The Valley Patriot family is none other than world-famous hypnotist Jerry Valley who starts his "Mind Over Matter" column (page 42) this month. We believe a man of his stature and reputation will be a valuable asset to our already stacked lineup of talent.

We were introduced to Mr. Valley last month as he met with "Heal Lawrence," a volunteer group that helps fire victims in Lawrence get back on their feet. Mr. Valley is doing a benefit for Heal Lawrence on April 7th at the Lawrence Firefighters Relief In.

Our third addition to the lineup this month is North Andover's Dr. Frank MacMillan, member of the North Andover Board of Health, a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology who also serves as it's Massachusetts Governor. He is also the Vice President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. (See Column on page 39).

Thank you to Jerry Valley, Al Getler and Dr. MacMillan for being brave enough to join our team. Thank you to all of our contributors, readers, advertisers, volunteers, and confidential sources over the last ten years for your undying loyalty and support that helped us grow this little startup newspaper from delivering to four communities in 2004, to the 42 cities and towns we distribute to this month.

We couldn't have done it without you. Onward and UPWARD!

Congrats to Tom Duggan and The Valley Patriot

Jeff Katz

VOTED AP's BEST RADIO TALK SHOW HOST

As a kid growing up in Philadelphia I used to write letters to celebrities and community leaders. I know some other kids were collecting baseball cards but this letter writing was my thing...what can I say, I was that kid. I received all sorts of autographed photos but the letters which I got back often contained some great pieces of advice.

One letter I wrote was to Lee Sherman Dreyfus who was then the Governor of Wisconsin. I asked him questions about being a leader in his community and his political career. I asked him for an auto-

graph photo for my collection and I asked, as I always did, if he had any advice to share.

Governor Dreyfus wrote to me that the guiding piece of advice in his own life was something that his father had taught him. It was, he said, "The Ten Year Rule." The Governor explained to me that he had been taught to always take a step back and ask if "what you are doing will still be important to you ten years later?" If it would be he said, then it was worth doing. Worth believing in. Worth fighting for.

I've taken that idea to heart in my own life and have always cherished the fact that Governor Dreyfus shared it with me

just as his father had shared it with him.

You see, ten years is a major mile marker. If you are fighting with someone today about something and then take that ten year view, you might very well realize that the fight is not worth it. Of course, you could also be on the bubble when it comes to taking a stand and through that ten year prism you come to realize that you have no choice but to take action because the issue is of such magnitude that in ten years you hope that something would have been done.

Ten years ago, Tom Duggan decided that the Valley needed a new voice. A print vehicle which would allow Valley residents with a wide range of views to share those opinions. With a fierce and fiery commitment to the First Amendment, Tom launched The Valley Patriot. I know that some dismissed his efforts out of hand, others scoffed and said it would never fly. Tom, however, was passionate about the paper and knew in his heart that it was necessary.

In the ten years since Tom launched The Valley Patriot we've seen the paper at the forefront of major breaking news along with a broad range of opinions. In addition to the printed paper, we hear Tom's perspective on WCAP Radio and enjoy the content online and via social media platforms.

The Valley Patriot is a shining beacon



Jeff Katz is a former police officer, former talk show host on Talk1200AM and won the Associated Press Award for Best Talk Show In Boston two years in a row. He is now an exclusive columnist for The Valley Patriot. WEBSITE: visionaccomplished.net

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The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition, are opinion pieces.

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Editorial Board:
President/Publisher: Tom Duggan, Jr.
VP/Director: Ralph Wilbur
Editor: Charles Ormsby
Copy Editor: Christine Ryan

in the Merrimack Valley and it is because Tom Duggan had the vision to launch it and the passion to steer it. I know that Governor Dreyfus would agree with me that The Valley Patriot easily meets the standard of the "ten year test."

Congratulations to everyone associated with The Valley Patriot on the tenth anniversary. Here's to another great decade ahead!

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Portions of the night's take will help us pay for Scholarships to the Lawrence High School Alumni Association and North Andover High School as well as the Andover DCS Co-Ed Softball League, The Methuen "Better Late than Never" Women's Softball League, True Vision Women's Softball League in Groveland and Salisbury, The North Andover Firefighter's Association Scholarship Fund, North Andover Police Association, and all the other organizations we sponsor throughout the year. Portions of the raffle will go to PuppyGirl Kate Whitney's One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue.



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The Tale of The Valley Government Gazette

Charles Ormsby
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

A little over ten years ago, Tom Duggan, his girlfriend, Ralph Wilbur and I started a newspaper called the Valley Government Gazette. We applied for and (using some inside contacts) received a \$500 million federal grant to start this much needed publication.

Having received the mulla (that's mulla as in money ... not Mullah as in Mullah Omar), we decided to hold a meeting on how to spend it. A villa on the French Riviera seemed like the appropriate spot (now we're down to \$499 million).

When we could pull ourselves away from the caviar and champagne, we finally settled down to select our business priorities. Of course our chief priority was to keep the gravy train rolling. That meant greasing the palms of our benefactors. Those responsible for giving us the grant had large families to support so we knew we couldn't just kick back ... aahhhh ... I mean, that is exactly what we needed to do: kick back some of the mulla.

First, we needed to help out Joe's (not his real name ... we must be discrete) nephew who always wanted a printing business. We didn't have time to request bids for building our own printing facility.

And why bother? We knew Joe's nephew was the winner. So we told Joe to expect \$100 million for building and operating our printing facility. OK, with that done, we were down to \$399 million.

Next we decided we needed a Web site. So we checked in with Nancy P. (you know the one!) who had greased the skids on our grant and found out she had a college buddy who knew how to spell HTNL ... well, 3 out of 4 isn't bad (Hey, 75% is a "C"!). So we told her to tell her friend that \$100 million was on its way for the GovGazette.com Website. Down to \$299 million.

Shortly thereafter, we got a text message from Nancy that said her friend needed help from another friend who lived in Balarus who could spell Web stuff even better than Nancy's friend. There was also something about a "back door" in the message which didn't smell right to me, but when it comes to that kind of stuff, it is better to not ask and not tell. In any case, she said she needed another \$100 million for the Belarus web programmers. Ouch ... down to \$199 million.

Next we needed to address the issue of our corporate headquarters. Of course, we needed a building at least as nice as the Eagle Tribune palace in North Andover.

We thought about shoveling out several million to the many outstretched hands in Lawrence, but Tommy insisted that we have a snazzy corporate headquarters in plush North Andover so the Eagle Tribune wouldn't be able to look down their noses at us.

We started inquiring about a building site in North Andover and soon found out we needed a bunch of zoning approvals, permits, traffic studies, etc. To do this we needed experts in climate change, weird frogs and snails, traffic patterns, town history (you know the old "historic district" ploy), ADA-compliance, earthquake dynamics, and fire suppression technology. After shelling out \$100 million for all this (now down to \$99 million), we were all set to start construction on our \$10 million building when we were told we needed to pay the prevailing wage.

Silly me. I said, "If I pay \$15/hour and someone agrees to work for \$15/hour, wouldn't that be the prevailing wage?" Ooppss ... I guess not.

After coughing up \$50/hour and paying for 3 "workers" to watch anyone who actually touched a hammer, we finally got the building built for \$80 million.

Down to \$19 million. Things were looking good at this point.

We were all ready to start laying out the first edition when the IRS called and asked if we were following all the regulations on wage rates, vacation time, family leave, health insurance, etc. After a thorough audit and \$5 million later (down to \$14 million), we had a clean bill of health and WE WERE READY TO ROCK AND ROLL!!

Well, almost. Next the EPA called and said government inspectors needed to check for mold and air quality in our building. It is true that we were heating with coal because our heating contractor was a relative of a well-known Democrat from a coal producing state (Don't blame us, we needed to keep everybody happy!). Well, emitting even one micro-gram of particulates per week with our carbon sequestration system just wouldn't satisfy the Feds. We were directed to put a windmill on the roof and lots of solar panels. These changes cost us an additional \$13 million.

Now things were getting tight. We're down to our last \$1 million. We would have made it but, after four years, we found out the idiot in charge of our \$100 million printing plant had spent all the

money on morale-building meetings and filming silly skits, and he had forgotten to purchase any printers!

OK, so we went to Plan B and decided to have Graphic Litho (a highly respected printing company in Lawrence) print our Government Gazette paper.

That would have worked, except that we found out it was almost impossible to log onto our \$200 million GovGazette.com Web site.

Tommy tried and tried and tried and finally he was able to log in and order a newspaper with our corporate credit card.

Hope springs eternal! Maybe things would improve as millions of subscribers flood the site.

Finally we made it!

What is that, Tommy? You say the Web site has been hacked and somebody charged \$1 million to our corporate credit card? WQT*&DR%*&E#!!!

OK. Yes, at this point we were down to \$0, but we didn't lose hope.

I searched my pockets and come up with \$6.19.

We were NOT out of it yet. Tommy was accustomed to working for practically nothing, so we asked, and Tommy agreed, to produce the first edition in one hour for just \$6.19.


Then a major problem arose. We had forgotten. Massachusetts has an \$8.00 per hour minimum wage.

But all was not lost. We conferred with our government partners and they gave us a great suggestion.

We took their suggestion, declared bankruptcy and sued everyone in sight! And, with all the money we made from suing, we started The Valley Patriot.

Now we are celebrating our ten-year anniversary with nothing but profits every month. What a country!

So you see what wonderful things come from government programs. What would we do without them?

*Dr. Charles Ormsby served two terms on the North Andover School Committee, co-founded of the North Andover Taxpayers Association, is a co-founder of and columnist for The Valley Patriot, broadcasts weekly opinion pieces for WCAP (980 AM) in Lowell, and is a faculty member in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Dr. Ormsby is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate degree from MIT. You can email him at cormsby@verizon.net*

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Who Cares About the Environment?

Just Look at the Environmental Mess in Lawrence and Listen for the Crickets

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER/PUBLISHER

In July of 2009 the Valley Patriot wrote an explosive story, publishing documents that reveled operators at the City of Lawrence’s brand new \$26 million water treatment facility had failed to test the city’s drinking water for a bacteria called E.coli from July 2008 to February 2009. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requires monthly testing for E.coli which can cause sickness if consumed. It was the second time in less than a year that the MassDEP fined Lawrence for failing to do mandatory E.coli testing.

When we published that story we had fully expected all the liberal, self-anointed “environmentalists” (who form “community organizations” to save the planet and protect the earth) to express outrage, demand accountability and hold

the city’s feet to the fire. We were wrong. In August of 2009 we wrote an exclusive expose about dangerous, leaking toxic chemicals and hazardous waste at the City of Lawrence Water Treatment Plant, complete with photos (some of which are on this page) and testimonials from whistle-blowers and city workers who were exposed to the serious health hazards, working in and around the leaking toxic materials, which were open and accessible to anyone entering the facility. City Workers had long complained to officials but nothing was ever done about until after we published our story.

Again, we expected individual environmentalists, local liberals or environmental activist groups to decry the storage of mercury and toxic chemicals at the water treatment plant in such a casual manner. I even called Masspirg, environmental advocacy groups, and local



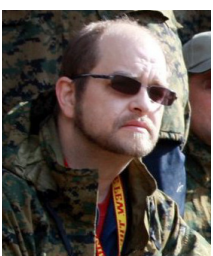
PHOTO: LAWRENCE CITY WORKER

In Augst of 2009, The Valley Patriot published a front page story exposing illegally stored, leaking toxic chemcals at the Lawrence Water Treatment plant; chemicals that city workers were exposed to for prolonged periods of time. A city employee took these photos at work and forwarded them to us, resulting in a zero care or concern by environmental “activists” and organizations in Massachusetts.

noise makers whose politics were “pro-environment” to see if we could initiate some action on their part to call for accountability for such environmental destruction. We couldn’t get one single environmental group involved to clean up the environmental disasters we covered in that story. We couldn’t even get them to give us a quote on the record, or return one phone call, e-mail or blog posting. Again and again we published stores of environmental hazards and disasters in the Merrimack Valley and the North Shore. Time and again we were ignored by the very people who demand public dollars to politic to “save the environment” and bill themselves as champions of our waterways and “precious resources.” Other stories that we exposed and were ignored by so called environmentalists were:

Our story about the Lawrence DPW caught on film dumping construction debris onto the banks of the Shawsheen River, our story of the City of Lawrence pumping thousands of gallons of human wastewater into the Shawsheen river (behind the South Lawrence East School), the illegal dumping at the Bellevue Cemetery in Lawrence, illegal storage of toxic chemicals at the city yard on the banks of the Spicket River, and leaking chemicals on High Street in North Andover, and so many more.

time we did, we got the sound of crickets by local, state and regional organizations who SAY their sole purpose is to advocate for clean air, clean water and protection of our natural resources. That makes us living, breathing proof of the fraud that is the environmental movement. If it doesn’t have to do with punishing businesses and property owners, if it doesn’t have to do with advocating a one-world government solution to global warming... er, I mean ... global cooling... I mean ... global climate change, these phonies really don’t give a damned about doing anything substantial to protect our air, our water or hold those who pollute it responsible for their actions. Just remember The Valley Patriot the next time a self serving, so called environmentalist starts preaching about global warming and how much they care about the environment. Remember that when a self-anointed lover of clean air and clean water starts demonizing conservatives who support property rights against phony environmentalist, business legislation. Chances are, there’s a chemical spill, or illegal dumping going on in their neighborhood that they are willingly ignoring. Today, the only acceptable environmental activism is that which is rooted in attacking property rights, growing government, increasing legislation that bankrupts businesses and does nothing to protect the earth. It has nothing at all to do with making the earth a better and cleaner place.



Tom Duggan is publisher of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass Citizens Alliance, a Police Survivor and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program from 10-noon on WCAP every Saturday. You can email him at valleypatriot@aol.com

In July of 2010 The Valley Patriot published a front page story exposing untreated human waste flowing Into the Shawsheen River behind the South Lawrence East School in Lawrence. The EPA had found, via “first-hand knowledge” that the City of Lawrence was pumping wastewater (human waste) into the Shawsheen River. Not one environmentalist, activist or organization condemned the dumping or demanded accountability.



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Why I Support The Valley Patriot and Tom Duggan

Al Getler

FORMER EAGLE-TRIBUNE PUBLISHER

Tom Duggan has not exactly been kind to me over the years in his newspaper. Strangely enough, I defend Tom's right to his opinions about me and anyone else he chooses to write about in The Valley Patriot.

One of the many things that make this country truly amazing is our First Amendment. This amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America gives Mr. Duggan the right to express his views however he sees fit. There were many times I wished he had kept those opinions to himself.

During my time as the publisher of The Eagle-Tribune, Tom saw me as his enemy. When I first arrived to the Merrimack Valley, he introduced me as a comedian hired to run the newspapers. Worse yet, Tom suggested; I was a comedian and a ventriloquist. He successfully conjured the notion that I would sit in my office and let the dummy make all the hard decisions. I wish it had been that easy. Even though I have been a performer since the age of 12, I know the difference between my day job and my night job.

The Eagle-Tribune has been an institution in this region in one form or another since the late 1800's. The Rogers family saw to it that the Merrimack Valley had a strong voice and a strong community supporter in the operation of the newspaper throughout the 20th century. All three Irving Rogers, I through III, gave the Merrimack Valley a newspaper to be proud of with two Pulitzer Prizes awarded to the

paper for doing what a daily newspaper does best; investigating and reporting the news.

Today, the newspaper industry has suffered from a difficult economy and a seismic shift in the way people consume their news. The Eagle-Tribune is read more now than ever before, yet its print circulation is the lowest it has been in many decades. This has caused your daily newspaper to become a shell of what it once was. I know because I had to downsize everything about the paper while modernizing its approach to reporting the news.

Tom made sure you knew each time I had to reduce the workforce of the newspaper. Anyone that worked closely with me during those times can tell you how difficult it was for me to say goodbye to very talented and dedicated people. There are many talented and dedicated people that remain at The Eagle-Tribune today. I worry about them constantly.

Soon The Eagle-Tribune and its sister papers in Gloucester, Newburyport and Salem will begin charging for the access to the online, app and digital versions of the newspaper. The ads announcing the impending paywall depict it has something good for the reader. The reader will not agree. Paying for what was once totally free will feel bad to readers.

No doubt, Tom will throw jabs at the paper for its paywall. That is his right. He is infamous for his bold opinions and for his criticism of the once 800 pound gorilla.

As you are reading Tom's coverage of The Eagle-Tribune's charging you for access to your local news, remember that the newspaper has to pay people to provide

that coverage and make it all work. Out-of-towners or not, the present owners of The Eagle-Tribune are adapting to a different newspaper world. It is a move I have supported. No doubt the Rogers family would have also made the decision; only sooner.

So, do I dislike Tom Duggan? Of course not. I hardly know him. Does he like me? I don't really know and frankly, I have never cared. I had a job to do under the protection of the First Amendment and so does Tom.

Tom has asked me to be a part of the 10th anniversary celebration of The Valley Patriot and I have accepted. It may be the worst decision of my career, but I will take my chances. To me there is nothing that speaks louder than the mere act of supporting that everyone in this country is entitled to their opinion.

Sure, I liked it more when Tom was picking on someone else other than me, but I never really got all that worked up about what Tom had written about me and my time at The Eagle-Tribune. It was a part of the community discourse. He is entitled to his opinions.

Look at where we are today as a nation. There is no discourse; no tolerance for the other person's opinion. We don't talk things through with passion and then go have a beer together. Instead, we feel a need to be on one side or the other. Strategists work to create messages to damage the other person's opinion and, at times, the other person.

Politics has become 'us versus them' (and even a third 'them' when you add in the Tea Party). Politicians and elected officials would rather adhere to party lines then resolve things logically. Our nation's leader doesn't even know how work with people who have a different opinion then that of his own; and that is a shame.

So, happy anniversary to The Valley Patriot and to you, Tom Duggan. Perhaps this small and symbolic gesture of my at-



Al Getler is President and CEO of Ellie on Wheels Media, LLC and the host of "Lead or be Led - WebTV for Leaders". Ellie on Wheels Media, LLC helps existing companies and start-ups build strong strategic direction and brand equity. They provide full media services to help brands succeed in social media, digital and traditional media marketing plan execution. Ellie on Wheels Media is a part of the Duct Tape Marketing Consultant Network and produces "Lead or be Led - Web TV for Leaders" with Gallo Productions, a web-based TV show about and for leaders. See www.LeadorbeLed.com

tending your anniversary celebration will, in some small way, show that two people with different opinions can celebrate a Free Press.

Of course, there is one thing Tom might not have completely thought through. He is handing me the microphone to say whatever I want. If I could cue the ominous and evil music and the thunder right now, I would.

Tom doesn't need to worry though. I always take the high road. But I cannot guarantee that my little wooden friend will.

Who's the dummy now, Duggan?

Al Getler is the president of Ellie on Wheels Media, a marketing and communications company. Find out more at www.algetler.com and follow him on Twitter at @algetler.

Congratulations on 10 AMAZING YEARS!

It's been fun to watch The Valley Patriot defy the odds and challenge conventional wisdom so successfully over the last ten years. Whether it's exposing corruption, covering stories others won't touch, or filing legislation to protect our freedom of the press, The Valley Patriot has made a significant difference in the Valley! Best wishes for your continued success.



~State Representative Linda Dean Campbell,
(D) Methuen, 5th Essex District

Phone: 617-722-2877 Fax: 617-722-9278 * Linda.DeanCampbell@mahouse.gov

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT LINDA DEAN CAMPBELL

Happy 10th Anniversary!

To the

VALLEY PATRIOT

We would like to congratulate Tom Duggan, Dr. Chuck Ormsby and Ralph Wilbur on The Valley Patriot's tenth anniversary! We are honored to be just small contributors to this monthly newspaper. We hope to see the Valley Patriot on newsstands for many years to come. Cheers!

~Megan and Pennie Hale
Methuen



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Andover Inn Honored at Leadership Conference with Award for Charitable Excellence

Inn Also Receives Core Value Award for Sustained Success

The team at the Andover Inn was honored with the Charitable Excellence award during Waterford Hotel Group’s recent Annual Leadership Conference and Awards Celebration, held at the Marriott Hartford Downtown in Hartford, CT. The Inn was also recognized during the conference with a Core Value award for sustained success.

The 2-day conference, attended by Waterford Hotel Group representatives and 55 managers from properties in the company’s portfolio, provided attendees the opportunity to share ideas, set goals, and foster the team spirit that are the hallmarks of Waterford’s consistently high performing properties. The Andover team was recognized as the Charitable Excellence winner and a Core Value award winner at awards ceremonies held to recognize the company’s top performers from 2013.

“The Andover Inn team is actively involved in giving back to their community on many levels,” commented Rob Winchester, President and COO for Waterford Hotel Group. “They have embraced the mission of the Waterford Group Charitable Foundation and have impacted the Andover region in such a positive way.” On the Inn’s Core Value award, Winchester added, “This award is given to a property for ability to achieve success in 2013 regardless of any obstacles throughout the year, and the Andover Inn has proved to be worthy of this recognition.”

About the Andover Inn

The beautiful Andover Inn offers 30 well-appointed guestrooms, three private function rooms, Samuel’s restaurant, and a beautiful back lawn for outdoor seasonal events. A member of the National Register of Historic Inns, the Andover Inn couples the classic elegance of a New England inn with modern amenities, such as wireless internet access, flat screen televisions, and a fitness center. Located on Chapel Avenue, across from the Academy’s Addison Gallery of American Art, the Inn provides a perfect venue for weddings, conferences and meetings, special occasions, and business or leisure travel. For more information, visit www.andoverinn.com.

About Waterford Hotel Group

Waterford Hotel Group has experience operating virtually every type of hotel property, including select service properties, all-suite hotels, conference centers, and large full service and resort properties. The company’s approach to hotel development and operations is hands-on, and features frequent site visits and constant communication with customers and partners. Additionally, Waterford Hotel Group offers centralized accounting, financial reporting, strategic marketing, human resources, and day-to-day operations management systems to increase market share and profitability at all properties. For more information, visit the company’s website at www.waterfordhotelgroup.com.



Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence Receives Ambassador’s Grant from MA State Automobile Dealers Association

Lawrence, Mass. (February 10, 2014) – (Back row, second from left) Markus Fischer, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence, joins club members in accepting a \$1,500 Ambassadors Grant from Robert O’Koniewski (back row, far left), executive vice president of the Massachusetts State Automobile Dealers Association (MSADA) and the Massachusetts State Automobile Dealers Charitable Foundation. Also representing MSADA at the gift presentation was William DeLuca IV (far right) of Woodworth Motors and the DeLuca Family of Dealerships in Andover and Haverhill.

Dracut Town Happenings

For further details on what is happening in Dracut and locations of all meetings, please visit the town website calendar section at:
www.dracut-ma.us

- Wed. Mar 12th, Permanent Building 4:30pm-6:30pm
- Tue. Mar 18th, Community Preservation, 7-8pm
- Wed. Mar 19th, Council on Aging, 2:30-3:30pm
- Permanent Building, 4:30-6:30pm
- Historical Commission, 7-8pm
- Thu. Mar 20th, Zoning Board of Appeals, 7-8pm
- Mon. Mar 24th, Finance Committee 6-7pm



- Wed. Mar 26th, Permanent Building 4:30-6:30pm
- Planning Board 7-8pm
- Mon. Mar 31st, Finance Committee 6-7pm

Dracut Senior Happenings

There are a lot more fun activities for our vital Dracut elders! Please see their calendar on their website: www.dracut-ma.us their calendar is within the newsletter.

FREE BREAKFAST FOR THE MONTH OF March 8:30am-9:00am

- Mar 12th, Wed. MVNP Site Special Meal, 11:30am
- Senior Citizens Club Meeting, 1pm
- Mar 13th, Thu. Wingate Health Care, 10:am
- Nurse Nancy, 1:30-3:45pm
- Mar 14th, Fri. Bowling, 9am
- Dollar Tree & Irish Cottage, 9am
- Mar 17th, Mon. Happy St. Patricks Day!!! Affordable Hearing tests, 10am
- Mar 18th, Tue. Veteran’s Breakfast, 9am
- Grocery Shopping, 9am
- Mar 19th, Wed. St. Pat’s Senior Citizens

- Club, 11:30am, Dinner Dance at Lenzi’s
- Dracut COA Board Meeting, 2:30pm
- Mar 20th, Thu. Visiting Angels “Living a Good Life”, 10:am
- Nurse Nancy, 1:30-3:45pm
- Mar 21st, Fri. Bowling, 9am
- Kmart & Weathervane, 9am
- Mar 24th, Mon. Middlesex DA Speaks on Elder Abuse, 10am
- Rep. Colleen Garry’s Office Hours, 10am**
- Mar 25th, Tue. Grocery Shopping, 9am
- Mar 27th Thu. Coffee with the Director 10:am
- Umass Lowell RN Students, 11am
- Nurse Nancy, 1:30pm
- Mar 28th Fri. Bowling, 9am
- Christmas Tree Shop/ China Blossom, 9am

Local Teens From Austin Prep School Earn Academic Medal

Austin Preparatory School’s Academic Decathlon Team placed second out of 15 teams at the small school division Academic Decathlon recently. The team’s excellent performance automatically qualifies the group for the state finals in March.

Members earned a total of 19 individual medals across six of the seven categories. The team’s strongest area was science (genetics), where it earned five of the nine available medals.

Junior John Smolak of North Andover earned gold medals in language & literature, economics, and science and art, along with a silver medal in music and a bronze medal in history. Junior Austin Nichols of Dracut served as an alternate.





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THE INCREDIBLE
TALENT OF DRACUT’S
DAVE SULLIVAN

Since 2007, Dave Sullivan of Dracut has put his incredible talents to work as an artist, drawing custom political cartoons that parody the newsmakers we cover in the pages of The Valley Patriot every month.

Each month I call Dave and tell him on the phone what scene I envision in my head and when the cartoon arrives in my email in-box, I am ALWAYS shocked to see how well he illustrated what was pictured in my mind.

We want to thank Dave Sullivan for brilliantly illustrating local, state and national figures in his original illustrations.

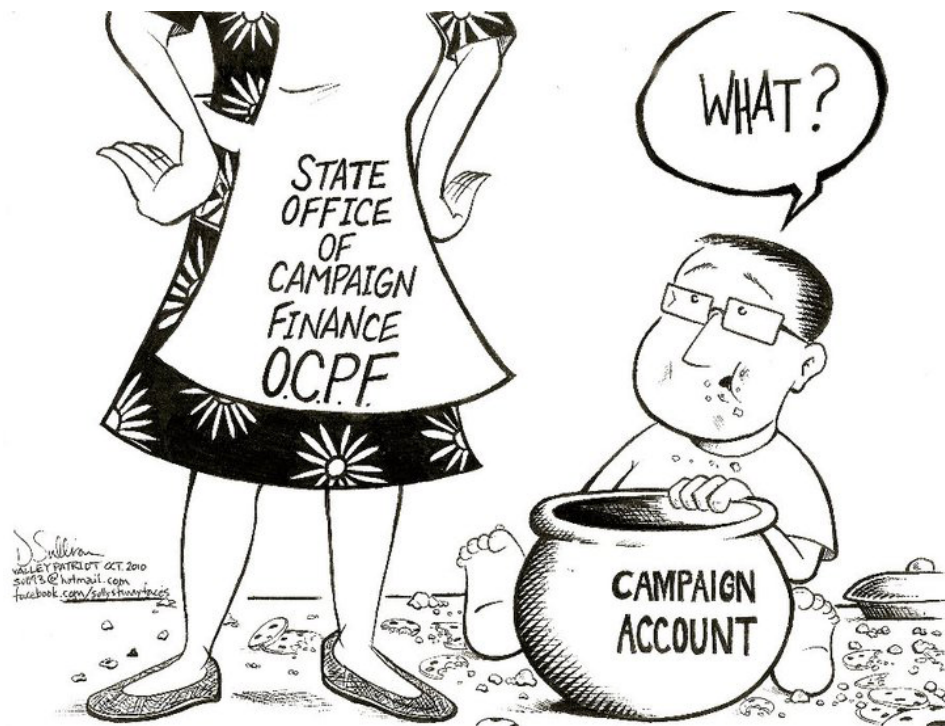
We asked Dave to send us his four favorite cartoons over the last seven years he’s been with us.

I was a little surprised at Dave’s selections and will be publishing our favorites in next month’s edition.

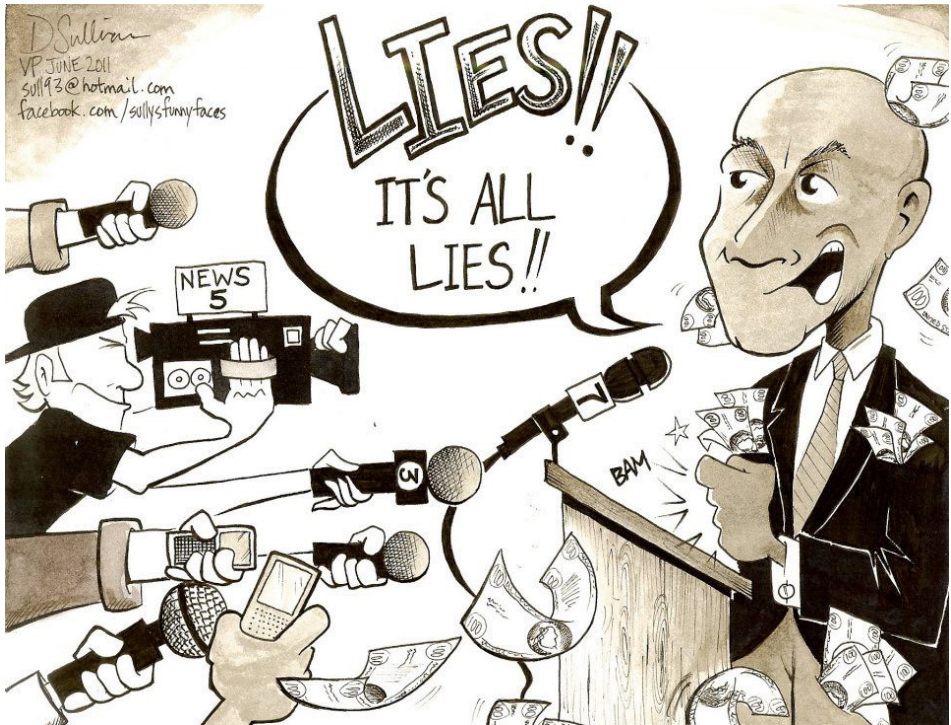
A big thank you as well to Debbie Bodda who was the subject of a Valley Patriot story back in 2007 and suggested that we talk to her friend Dave about doing political cartoons.



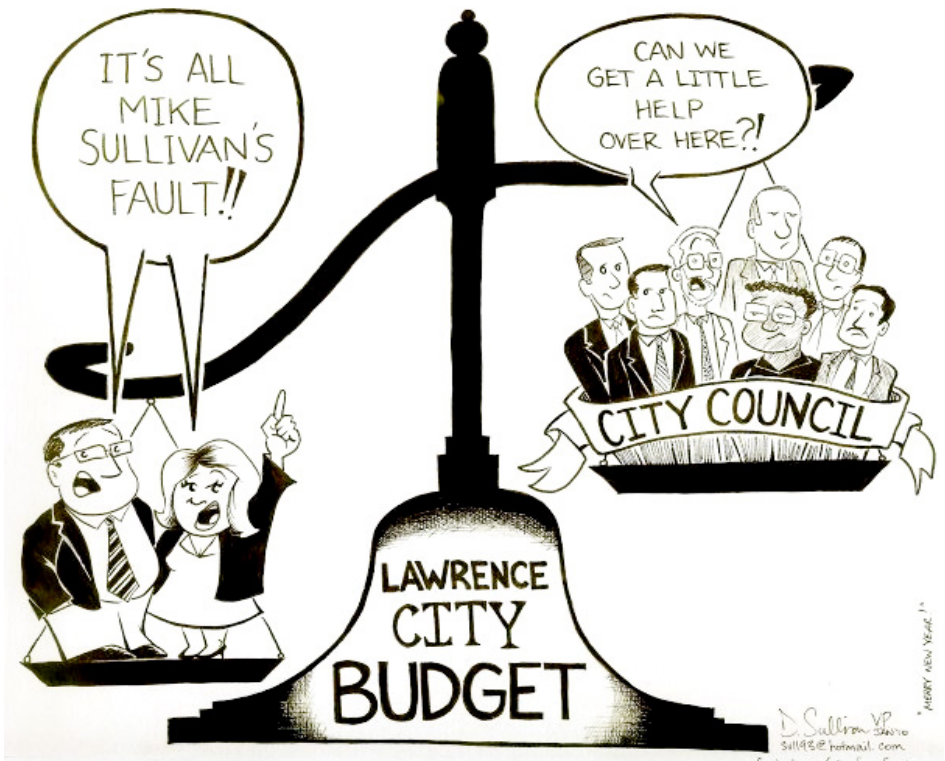
Our Political Cartoonist Dave Sullivan (Dracut) was told he could do whatever he wanted this month. This is what he came up with. For sure, our coverage of Patrick Blanchette, Wiliam Lantigua and Lenny Degnan helped catapult us into more readers homes over the past ten years than anyone else.



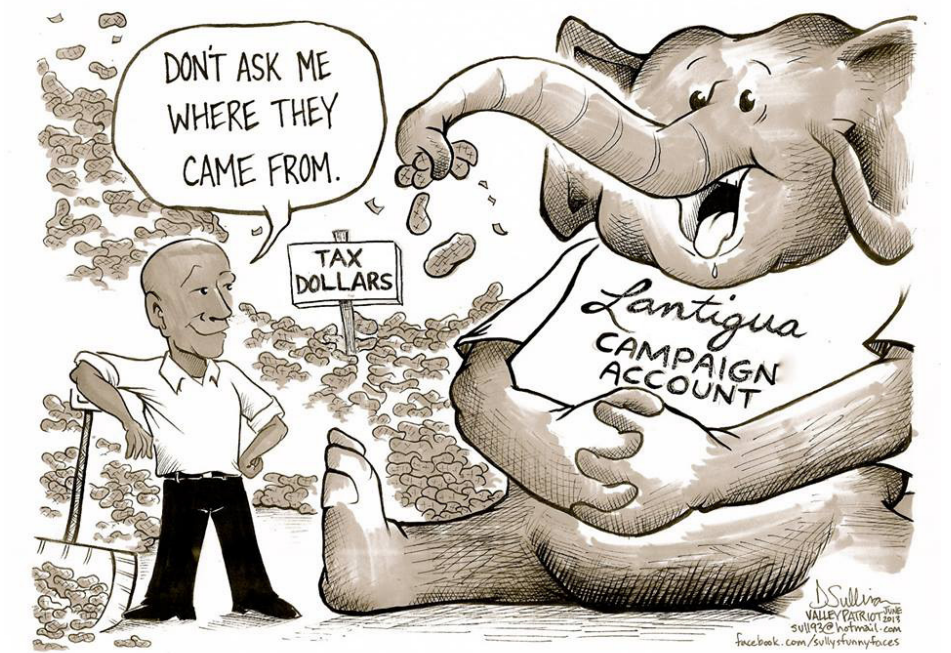
1. Baby Blanchette. October, 2010. Caught by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance. No, his hand is not literally inside the cookie jar, but I still like the way this reads. What really makes this cartoon work for me is the small details: the crumbs all around, the dress pattern, only the “What?” inside the word balloon. This was a fun one.



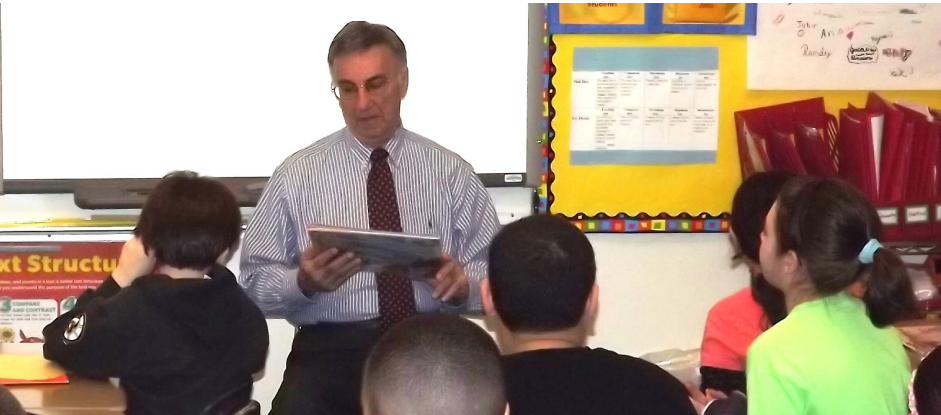
2. Lantigua Lies. June 2011. This could have very well been any one of Willie’s press conferences: Pounding the podium, constantly lying while money flew out of his pockets.



3. Tipping the Scales. January 2010. Another fun, simple, visual. Blanchette and Silva tip the scales for their argument while the rest of the City Council needs help.



4. Feeding his Campaign Account. June 2013. Yes, I know it’s an elephant. Yes, I know that Willie is a Democrat. If I had my druthers, I would’ve drawn a donkey chewing on a bale of hay with a million hay bales behind him. But an elephant, sitting amid a metric ton of peanuts, is more fun to draw.



Mayor Zanni Reads to Students

Organized to coincide with the birthday of Dr. Seuss, Methuen’s public schools invited local leaders, parents, and volunteers to participate in the National Education Association’s Read Across America program.

“It’s a way for the community to come into the classroom and promote literacy,” said Mayor Steve Zanni.

Methuen’s Read Across America activities have focused on getting visitors into classrooms and reading to students.

Zanni, a former teacher, has participated in each elementary school’s program every year since being elected. Describing the visits as an opportunity to visit with students, Zanni said he values the experience.

“It’s why I went into teaching as a young man,” said Mayor Zanni. “I love working with students, and I love that our schools are trying to connect our students with the community at large.”

Mayor Zanni Promotes “File fof Life Program”

The City of Methuen is inviting residents to contact the Senior Center or city Hall to take advantage of the City’s free “File of Life” program.

Sponsored by the Senior Center, the “File of Life” program features magnets and wallet-inserts for residents to detail prescribed medications and existing health problems. The inserts are placed in wallets; while the magnets are intended to be placed on refrigerators.

In the event of an emergency, first

responders are trained to look for the information in the “File”.

“This program equips our public safety officials with the information they need when responding to emergencies,” said Mayor Steve Zanni, who pointed out that by having this information in an easy-to-find place, it increases the effectiveness of emergency responders. “I am glad our Senior Center has been so proactive in getting these materials out to residents.”

DiZoglio Joins Lawrence Drug Court for Session Court, Brings Substance Abuse Treatment to Area Drug Offenders

State Representative Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen), who hosted several roundtable discussions last month, addressing substance abuse in the Merrimack Valley, recently joined the Lawrence Drug Court for session.

There has been a startling increase in heroin usage in particular in the Merrimack Valley, with a record-high number of police logs and obituaries noting a fatal overdose of the drug. Local arrests are at an all-time high of out-of-state people purchasing heroin in the Commonwealth. Experts on substance abuse have noted an evolution in the profile of the average heroin user, from a drug previously associated with the urban poor to a substance that has grown in popularity with young suburbanites.

The rise in heroin use, many experts argue, can be attributed to the growing popularity of prescription painkillers, most prominently the opioid, oxycodone.

“We as policymakers need to be constantly looking for ways to combat substance abuse in our communities,” said DiZoglio. “If we don’t fight to learn about and combat this issue, who will? I have heard from countless local residents who have either faced substance abuse themselves or who have friends or family battling addiction. One fall or injury can result in a prescription for a potentially highly addictive painkiller. When that prescription ends, too many are seeking life-threatening alternatives, such as heroin, for obtaining and maintaining that same type of high.”

The Commonwealth is home to 19 of the nation’s more than 2,500 drug courts.

The Lawrence drug court is a weekly session held in a court before a judge where probation officers, defense counsel, assistant district attorneys and treatment providers appear with defendants suffering with drug addiction whose cases have been resolved by pleas or guilty findings. Admission into the court is attained after assessment by probation with the input from treatment providers.

Over a minimum one-year period, defendants going before the drug court receive intensive treatment, with regular drug and alcohol testing, and appear before a judge once a week early on, followed by fewer court sessions with a judge as progress is made in treatment. Once a defendant completes a GED, lands a job, has permanent housing and is drug-and-alcohol-free for one year, they “graduate” from the program.

“My visit to the Lawrence Drug Court was to gain more insight into the process of recovery after addicts have been identified and brought into the system,” DiZoglio said. “While prevention is certainly the best way to combat the disease of addiction, we need to also be focused on lowering the rate of recidivism for those already struggling. I want to thank Judge Michael J. Brooks and everyone else at the drug court for the critical work they are doing in bringing abusers into treatment.”

DiZoglio regularly hosts roundtable discussions on combating drug addiction in the Merrimack Valley. These events are free and open to the public. Those wishing to attend future meetings are encouraged to contact the Representative’s office at 617-722-2800 ext. 8558.

The Merrimack Valley Irish Connection

1st American Saint Patrick’s Day Celebration

Diane Severance, Ph. D. and Dan Graves, MSL Christianity.com

Jack Doyle, County Sligo
VALLEY PATRIOT IRISH COLUMNIST

On, March 17, 1737, the Charitable Irish Society of Boston held a St. Patrick’s Day celebration; it seems to have been the first in America. Since then, St. Patrick’s Day celebrations across the United States have been full of leprechauns, the wearing of the green and the celebration of all things Irish. In all the fun and frolic, the true Patrick (who probably died between 455 and 493) can easily be forgotten.

Dates and details in Patrick’s life are not known with certainty. He was most likely born between 372 and 390, possibly near present day Glasgow, Scotland. His parents, Calpurnius and Conchessa, were leaders of the Christian community in the still unidentified village of Bannavem Taburniae. Patrick did not take the Christianity of his parents seriously and enjoyed having fun with his friends. One day, when he was sixteen, he was amusing himself near the sea when Irish pirates captured him. They sold Patrick as a slave to an Irish chieftain named Milchu. His job? To care for the chief’s sheep.

Alone in the fields with the sheep, Patrick remembered the Christianity of his parents, and he accepted it as his own. He later wrote,

“I was sixteen years old and knew not the true God; but in that strange land the Lord opened my unbelieving eyes, and although late I called my sins to mind, and was converted with

my whole heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my estate, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and consoled me as a father consoles his children... The love of God increased more and more in me with faith and the fear of His name. The Spirit urged me to such a degree that I poured forth as many as a hundred prayers in one day. And even during the night, in the forests and on the mountains where I kept my flock, the rain, and snow and suffering which I endured, excited me to seek after God...”

Six years later, Patrick managed to escape and returned to his family. In a dream, he saw Irish children pleading with him to bring the Gospel to them. “O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once more amongst us.” His heart longed to return to his former captors and share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. He trained for the ministry and returned to Ireland where, despite fierce opposition, he spread the story of Jesus among the pagan tribes in the Irish language he had learned while a slave.

From the seventh through the ninth century, legends and myths gathered around Patrick’s name. The best-known is that he drove the snakes from Ireland. From the start, he was regarded as a saint and has long been venerated as the patron saint of Ireland. His feast is held on this day, March 17.

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig: Happy St. Patrick’s Day

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What an Accomplishment!

Through a lot of hard work and perseverance The Valley Patriot has proven itself to be a trustworthy and reliable source for news and information throughout New England.


I admire your style and your dedication to our veterans and public safety officers.

Keep up the great work!

Congratulations on Your 10th Anniversary

State Representative Jim Lyons, (R) Andover





There is nothing more important in any community than to have an independent voice you can rely on for straightforward news and commentary about the things that matter!

Congratulations on your Tenth Anniversary your hard work has certainly paid off!
~ State Representative Diana DiZoglio (D) Methuen

I Remember how they Laughed ...

10 Years and 125 Editions Ago

I REMEMBER SO WELL ...

I remember when the very first edition of The Valley Patriot was delivered to my office in Lawrence City Hall back in 2004. I had never seen anything like it. It was a breath of fresh air for free speech in the Lawrence area! Tom, you and your team have come a long way since those days, you ought to be proud!

I also remember taking my share of criticism in the pages of this newspaper, too, but it was always fair and never personal.

Mostly, I remember when you first unveiled your vision for standards in journalism, how you were laughed at and mocked by the political insiders and the newspaper industry.

CONGRATULATIONS ON GETTING THE LAST LAUGH!

Mike Sullivan



(Then) Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan in July of 2005 at the placement of our very first newspaper box on Mt. Vernon St. in Lawrence.



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Congratulations on your 10th Anniversary

For ten years The Valley Patriot has been out-shining, out-performing, and proving the skeptics wrong. While other publications seem to be cutting back on news coverage and shrinking the size of their paper, The Valley Patriot has quite noticeably grown every single month since publishing your first edition back in March of 2004.

Thank you Tom, Chuck, and Ralph for giving your readers 10 years of the very best news, commentary, investigative reports and fair election coverage.

~ State Senator Bruce Tarr



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Our Celebration is Really All About You... The Story That Never Made Print!

People frequently ask me, “What is the ‘secret’ of your success?”

While I could never boil down to one single reason, I have made no secret of the fact that teamwork is the biggest reason this little engine continues to defy the odds, chugging uphill, every single month.

Our readers provide the majority of our content. That’s the key.

We have an amazing team here at The Valley Patriot. Our family of dedicated volunteers performs dozens of different functions within any given month.

Running a newspaper is a very complicated task.

It involves writing, editing, researching stories, color correcting photos, balancing bank statements, covering local events, interviewing local officials, mailing invoices, answering phones and emails, and social media requests, designing, proof reading and eventually delivering the print copy of the paper.

Every single day someone steps forward to say, “How can I help?”

That’s what this newspaper is all about.



It’s about reaching out to the community and asking, “How can I help?”

Our readers are the proof.

Let me tell you a really great story that never made the pages of this newspaper but is immortalized as legend among our Facebook and social media followers.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Last year I was giving a speech at a Tea Party rally in Lowell on the steps of the police station. A text message flashed across my phone from a police officer in Boston who was attending the Boston Marathon. The text simply said “Bomb, more coming, be ready.”

By the time I finished my speech (three minutes later) another text came in from my twitter newsfeed. “Bomb Explodes at Boston Marathon.”

My instinct was to rush to the office, but I hadn’t eaten all day. Besides, this story was so big that there probably wasn’t much I could find out in the first hour as law enforcement was still responding to the scene.

Before we even sat down at a local restaurant, a flurry of texts came flooding in from friends, readers, local police officers on their way to the finish line and even a 911 dispatcher who worked in the Boston Area.

While my friends were eating and watching replays on the restaurant TV, I was posting information coming directly from emergency responders, and sharing it on The Valley Patriot’s Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

By the time I made it back to the office I had an open line of communication with emergency personnel of every stripe, including doctors, emergency room nurses, EMT’s, hospital administrators, and security guards at the hospitals.

Because of our incredible network and a dedicated team of volunteers who came in that night, we were able to funnel the correct information, post it as breaking news, live as it happened, and far ahead of the Boston TV stations.

“It’s terrorism Tom” one text read from an emergency room nurse.

“We are pulling out shrapnel from the victims.”

I froze. I was stunned. I knew this woman.

The woman texting me was not just a nurse at a Boston area hospital but a former member of the armed services who saw action in Afghanistan. If anyone could make a statement like that and know what they were talking about, it was her.

When we contacted our EMT friends who had transported some of the victims, they confirmed.

As I started to post the information online detailing that we had first-hand confirmation of a terrorist attack, one thought rang in my head over and over.

“The Valley Patriot network ROCKS!”

When I finally posted the information it was met with a barrage of doubters and naysayers accusing me of trying to sensationalize the story as a cheap stunt to get publicity for our newspaper.

One malcontent said I “had to be making it up” because he was watching the news on TV and nobody was calling it terrorism. I was scum. I was a bottom feeder. I was taking advantage of the bombing victims and their suffering. I was hurting the families. My sources were bogus. A few people even posted on their own Facebook pages calling the Valley Patriot a “rag.” One genius actually called for a boycott of our advertisers less than an hour after my initial post.

All the critics faded into the woodwork, however, when TV news stations started to slowly come out with “rumors” of shrapnel being removed from victims at the hospital, eventually confirming our sources’ reports.

THE NETWORK REDUX

Days later, when law enforcement shut down all of Boston to hunt down the Muslim terrorist, our network of readers and supporters sprang into action again.

At least two dozen people connected to the search were updating us in real time, minute by minute. And we were passing that information to you online.

When we got word from a source that the terrorist had been captured, we posted it right away.

Again I was attacked for “making things up” and “pretending to know what’s really going on.”

That is, until the Boston TV news eventually confirmed what we were reporting to our readers ... again.

HE WAS ONE DEGREE OUTSIDE OUR NETWORK

Less than a week later we got a call from the taxi driver who unknowingly took the two Muslim terrorists on their dry run of the Marathon route the night before the bombing.

His name oddly enough, is Jim Duggan. He is no relation.

Jim found out about us from a former advertiser who followed us on Facebook during the bombing. She knew Jim, and she knew me, so she put us together.

We did an exclusive interview with Jim, checked him out, checked out his story, and then posted our third consecutive, online exclusive story on the Boston Marathon.

Fox 25 picked up that story and gave the Valley Patriot credit, but CNN reported the story and gave credit to no one.

But I didn’t care. Our readers and our advertisers knew it was our story. They followed along from the beginning.

I wanted to share this story with my print

PAYING ATTENTION: PAGE 47

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Thinking About The Valley Patriot’s 10th Anniversary

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The most frequently asked question that I receive when the topic of The Valley Patriot newspaper comes up is why do you write for The Valley Patriot?

The quick answer is, I want to and Tom lets me.

But there is more, another reason is that when I send in my column, Tom does not edit the content. Spelling is checked and paragraph spacing is performed but that’s about it. The Valley Patriot reader gets unaltered commentary and news.

My very first column was in November 2006 entitled, “Parent Involvement, A Missing Element in the Lawrence Public Schools”. I wrote this as a new member of the Lawrence School Committee. I believe the column could be written today and the topic would still be very pertinent to our times!

Here are two memorable quotes in the column; According to the President of the National Education Association, Reg Weaver, “To reach their full potential, students need parents to take an active role in their education. Parents should be their

children’s favorite teacher.” The President of the United States stated at the fourth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act, “Schools that succeed have got parents who are involved at the school. Parent involvement is a very important part of the success of schools around America.” When you read these, you can see for yourself that they could have been spoken yesterday and be right in step to what is going on now. There are still too many empty school parking lots on report card night.

Another reason I am proud to be a part of The Valley Patriot and why I believe what keeps the Valley Patriot relevant today?

As long as I can remember, The Valley Patriot stood and still stands for lesser and smaller intrusive government.

Just take the topic of Lawrence public schools; there alone we see how big ineffective government does little to change what it starts out to change. From the beginning until now I have been against the state taking over our public schools. The parents, the people, the voters of Lawrence, including the elected Law-

rence School Committee should be the ones overseeing our children’s education, not unelected bureaucrats from Boston! It doesn’t matter how much money Mr. Riley our Receiver/Superintendent attracts and brings into Lawrence.

It doesn’t matter how many photo opportunities that are made available for all elected and unelected officials to participate in. One man, one individual with all that power most often leads to trouble. How many times does this need to happen in Lawrence before we learn our lesson? Also I am fully aware and understand that my opinion means nothing to those in power! I get that! This is why I have no problem saying that I do not believe that it was the Lawrence School Committee’s fault for the state takeover. This, my friend, falls on the lack of leadership by the former mayor, Mayor William Lantigua! I refer to the 81 page report of an audit of the Lawrence public schools that was conducted by the state’s Education Department. That report refers to the inability of the former Mayor to lead the Lawrence public schools in a productive manner.

I could go on and on, but I believe

you, the readers of The Valley Patriot, are aware and are educated enough to know when big government beginning from Governor Patrick on down, is out right not telling you the truth.

So having said all the above, I am very proud to say that I am a part of The Valley Patriot family. I consider it a privilege to write a column every month and have readers who see me at the grocery store or at a city event, come up to me and encourage me to continue writing and making a case for conservatism.

For this I say thank you to all and thanks to Mr. Tom Duggan for allowing me to write.

God bless you all and may God continue to bless The Valley Patriot!

Happy 10th Anniversary!

Peter Larocque

Peter Larocque is a former member of the Lawrence School Committee and is a regular columnist for The Valley Patriot. You can email him at: peterlarocque@hotmail.com

facebook.com/valleypatriot



Missing in action 1/3rd of the time: Georgetown Deserves Better!

Lonnie Brennan
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

First, for the disclaimer: I very much like Georgetown Selectman Phil Trapani and I certainly very much like Georgetown Selectman Steve Smith. They are both great guys, and I very much like to chat with them at various events as they are both very intelligent and generally good guys. Heck, when Phil went in for scheduled surgery a few years back, my bride and I instantly sent a fruit basket to his family. It's a small town; we put political opinions aside when it comes to family. People care about people.

But, they both also know that I write for this paper, and I adhere by its adopted mottos, including no fear, and certainly no favoritism. And, as with the rounding of the big 10-year Anniversary of The Valley Patriot, a paper founded not to protect politicians, but to protect the taxpayer, well, here goes, I'm about to risk making two more enemies...just an ever-growing list....

With the 10-year anniversary of the paper, an expansion continues with The Valley Patriot, including an expansion of the process of reviewing the work performance of various taxpayer funded workers as well as board members and elected officials. With regret, the data turned up pretty bad for two Georgetown elected officials: Selectmen Stephen Smith and Philip Trapani.

Phil Trapani missed 33% of the last 27 'regular selectmen meetings' (2012 and 2013 minutes postings available online) and Steve Smith missed 19%. What's worse, some meetings were called off because the 5-member board failed to have a quorum, and Steve's numbers were even worse at one time, but since becoming chair, he no longer sticks out as the sole spike in lack of attendance at meetings, and his percentage had lowered.

I don't care how much you or I like or dislike anyone, if an elected official fails to show up, some portion of the population (in Phil's and Steve's case, the tax raisers, but hey, that's more than half the town), lose a voice. There doesn't appear to be any rhyme or reason or pattern of absences discernable from the data (except some guesses with amongst the staff when you compare some low-attendance dates to certain sporting events), but rather a

smattering of a miss here, a miss there for the duo. In contrast, the other three members fared quite well, with only a couple of misses during their tenure.

Neither Mr. Smith nor Mr. Trapani are up for re-election any time soon, so neither has to worry about elections or support as we of course love them as people, but they should try to tighten things up a bit and not embarrass themselves and our Town, as they show up on high-spike lists of elected officials who don't make their own regular meetings. Stay tuned for more postings, hopefully not from our town, although...

Oh, and what about the upcoming town meeting and proposition 2 1/2 over-ride? Yup, there's another \$7 million or so on the way. This time to renovate the high school, and, they're tying the high school funding to the Penn Brook new school, so, on this trajectory, you can expect your taxes to nearly double in four years...as they certainly have adopted the motto "nothing but the best, for the best", and no expense is to be spared to go from 'sub-standard' to 'opulent'. I guess it's easy to spend other folks' money.

Moving on to town events, this Spring there will be a flurry of fun activities including the High School band and chorus performances on March 11th, the Penn Brook Spelling Bee also on the 11th, the St. Mary's Church Electronic Recycling and Bike Collection taking place on Saturday March 15th, the Baseball Bash on March 22nd, and you can expect to see a lot of other events popping up and filling the calendar with the various groups in town including the Fish and Game, GAA, Georgetown Cultural Council, Historic Society, Knights of Columbus, PTA, the local churches and others. As always, updates and details for all items can be found at www.GeorgetownTODAY.org.



Lonnie Brennan is a former Georgetown Selectman, former candidate for State Rep. publisher of Georgetowntoday.org and Winner of the 2013 Valley Patriot Good Will Ambassador Award. You can email him at:

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Unfair taxation looming in Massachusetts again

Joe D'Amore
VALLEY PATRIOT GROVELAND COLUMNIST

On February 25th the State's wire services released a report that a committee known as the Tax Fairness Commission appointed by the Massachusetts legislature is expected to make recommendation for a graduated tax to levy an increasing burden on high wage earners and supposedly a lesser burden on low wage earners. The recommendation will be delivered through a constitutional amendment aimed at replacing the state's current flat income tax of 5.2%

The commission will also recommend increases in certain exemptions and tax credits to provide income tax relief on low-income individuals.

"Were looking at fairness," said State Sen. Michael Rodrigues, a Westport Democrat and commission co-chair of the 15 member panel which was created by an amendment to the transportation bill of last July. "The question is, is it fair that the poorest pay a higher percentage of their income to taxes than do the richest? We tried to address that in a specific, but not too specific way."

The problem with this ruse is that it has been tried before. The tax payers of Massachusetts are protected by the constitution that mandates level taxation across all income levels, but progressive Democrats have assaulted this provision with ballot initiatives for decades. The last one was soundly defeated by voters in 1994. They believe that to alleviate the regressive and punitive aspects of taxation, a graduated tax solution is in order.

Massachusetts voters need to be aware of this development and be prepared to defeat this ballot question if it materializes again. The progressive aspects of a graduated tax scheme will never work in Massachusetts since the state's spiraling spending patterns on social programs, including those gripped by massive abuse and inefficiencies such as the EBT related programs, will cause all citizens to have their taxes increased.

If this constitutional amendment is passed, there would be a lowering of the boom of sorts as individual tax brackets



Joe D'Amore is a Groveland Selectman and winner of the 2013 Valley Patriot Editor's Choice Award.

would selectively be snared for increases beyond 5.2 %. This phenomenon is illustrated well in California, a state that has embraced the graduated tax system and has seen its fortunes decline as a result of it. Individual tax payers are charged 6% at a paltry \$27,897 annual income and then a whopping 9.3% at \$48,942. The median household in Massachusetts according to the US Census is \$66,000. Therefore, the cream of middle income earners in Massachusetts; the so called "working class" would be the primary recipients of a "graduated" (higher) level of income taxation. The blow to fledgling business start-ups and job creation will be devastating.

You may remember that last year legislators said no to Governor Patrick's massive tax increase proposals. Since it is politically difficult to pass a sizeable "across the board" increase, a graduated structure will provide an opportunity for a more stealthy solution by allocating increases to new brackets across the entire spectrum of wages. This would largely be done behind closed doors in committees without any public input, amply supported by the constitutional amendment.

Constitutional amendment proposals provide a saving grace for Massachusetts voters. It requires a lot of votes and effort to pass them. Voters must become keenly aware of this perennial attempt by progressive Democrats who seek to make already overburdened taxation even more burdensome.

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Lawrence Exchange Club Firefighters of the Year, Andover Firefighters: North Unit 1 Central Station, Deputy Chief James Dolan, Lieutenant Terrence Retelle, Lieutenant Todd Pomerleau, Firefighter Clifford Pattullo, Firefighter Thomas Kennedy, Firefighter Michael Oteri, Firefighter/EMT Robert Murphy, Firefighter/EMT Kevin Farragher, Unit 1 Ballardvale Station, Lieutenant John Ronan, Firefighter Shawn Kelley, Firefighter Donald Hinckley, Unit 1 West Station, Lieutenant Robert Dalton, Firefighter Ernest Vocell, Firefighter Todd Collins, Firefighter/EMT Christopher Morgese, Firefighter/EMT David Pas.



Lawrence Exchange Club Police Officer of the Year Andover Detective Kevin Aufiero with Chief Patrick Keefs, and North Andover Police Officer of the Year Mark M. Wilson second from right, with Police Chief Gallagher.



Lawrence Exchange Club Firefighters of the Year, North Andover: Lieutenant Bonenfant, Lt. Graham Rowe, Firefighters Sean Fountain, Scott Swiniarski, Jonathan McCarthy, Gary Ford, Gary Wentworth, John McClellan, Jeff Judge, Len Severino, and Dan Pas.

Saying Goodbye to Greg Rigby

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER COLUMNIST

Andover has sadly lost one of its most ardent supporters with the untimely death of Gregory Rigby. Mr. Rigby, a resident of Andover, Essex County, Massachusetts and the United States of America, was a man who believed in and practiced good citizenship. He was a native of Michigan, but came to live in Andover, beginning a long interest in town affairs.

As a financial investment counselor and wealth management advisor, he had an active and knowledgeable interest in fiscal responsibility. As a taxpayer and homeowner, he was also concerned about Andover maintaining a prudent and strong accountability to the residents of the town.

To those who knew him, he was friendly and engaging, respected and admired as a person who cared about and understood his fellow man. He was appointed as a member of the Town Finance Committee in 2011 and served diligently in that capacity until 2012, where he reviewed and questioned the spending and budgets of the town.

He was not reappointed, but did stay involved and established a website called

TownofAndover.com with his co-founder, Robert Landry, where they encouraged greater citizen participation. The website’s home page declares:

“The mission statement is to be the taxpayers’ advocate in the Town of Andover, MA. The website was created to provide greater transparency into the governance on matters vital to residents and taxpayers.”

Included on the website is an important note further stating, “the content of the site is in no way intended to be critical of our friends and family members, who serve as teachers, policemen, and firefighters. Your union leadership has been very effective representing your interests. The elected town leadership, however, has failed to effectively represent the taxpayers.”

The current path is financially unsustainable for town employees, as well as the taxpayers of Andover.”

As one who exemplified his belief that “citizen participation” in town affairs should be a requirement for all residents, Greg Rigby was a man that can be admired as a good and faithful servant of Andover.

He will be greatly missed.

The Center at Punchard

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER COLUMNIST

One of the busiest places in Andover is The Center at Punchard, and this is the perfect time of the year to examine the many activities available to seniors. The center has an activity for anyone, and if one can’t be found, the center, invites suggestions for an activity.

“The Andover Chroniclers” produce a monthly cable show, shown on Comcast channel 8 or Verizon channel 47. It has been a popular feature for over ten years, produced by this group of seniors. The Chroniclers are looking for volunteers, who would like to take part in script writing, video production, publicity, and research. “Enthusiasm, not experience, needed” is the watchword. Check out this activity at The Center at Punchard.

The center is asking for ideas on other activities, from seniors. A chess club, learn how to play cribbage, or form an investment group. Many of the feature programs or activities that the center

promotes began as a suggestion from a senior. There will be focus groups to discuss ideas for programs, the newsletter, etc., join the discussion. Being part of the planning is important for the continued success of this outstanding senior center. Information is available through the news and views monthly newsletter. Call the info line at 978-623-8377 or check out the website www.andoverseniorcenter.org to be put on the mailing list.

A partial list of the current activities: book club, cultural events, fix-it-shop, lectures, forums, trips, and the list continues. Each day Monday through Friday, a lunch is served at the center. A donation of \$2.50 is suggested and reservations must be made 24 hours the day before. The lunch menu has a variety of outstanding meals each month and can be found in the newsletter.

The Center at Punchard, is located at 30 Whittier Court, Andover, MA, and invites all seniors to take part in the activities and friendships available at the center.

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

Gay Marriage

D. B. Langevin

VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I am married. I guess you could say I am 'in a marriage'. I am not in a gay marriage, just like I don't live in a gay house or drive a gay car. My parents weren't in a heterosexual marriage nor are my siblings and countless number of straight couple friends. Just like a rose, a marriage is a marriage is a marriage.

I asked my gay and lesbian friends who are married some questions about their relationships. They were remarkably unremarkable, sounding like any relationship between any two people regardless of their sexual orientation.

Mike and Jeff have been together for almost sixteen years. I've known Mike since we were in our early teens. I met Jeff shortly after Mike did. They met at Friend's Landing a now long gone 'gay' dance club that had been in Haverhill.

I remember when Mike met Jeff. A day or two later Mike left on a business trip to California, I believe. When he got back he was all doughy eyed and bubbly because Jeff had sent flowers to his hotel room. It was a terribly romantic gesture that I was entirely jealous of. They didn't get married until 2009, well over five years after marriage was made legal for gay couples in the state of Massachusetts.

When I asked them what made their relationship work, Mike answered that they enjoy each other's company, accept each other's strengths and weaknesses and step back every once-in-awhile to assess what's important. Mike says one of those things is to put your spouse above all others and never go to bed angry. About two years ago, Mike and Jeff moved from Massachusetts to Palm Springs. They said it was a big test for their relationship because, when they arrived, they only had each other. My wife and I were lucky to be the first to visit them a few weeks after they moved into their new home. They had already begun to create a new circle of friends.

From my observation of this couple whom I am proud to call my friends, they work because they truly enjoy each other's company above anyone else's.

Our friends Liz and Diane have been together for twenty-seven years. I've known them for twenty of them. Similar to Mike and Jeff, they met at a women's bar. Liz says it was love at first sight. After being together for seventeen years, Liz gave birth to their son Jacob.

I remember biting my own nails over this decision wondering how they would adjust to parenthood after being a couple who were set in their ways and lifestyle for so long. My concerns were a waste of time. They were married in December of 2005. Liz says that their relationship works because they are dedicated to their family and making sure that their son has the best of both parents. She says that checking in with each other and having long conversations on how they can make it work helps. Supporting each other's interests as well as spending time apart is a good way to rekindle things. Just as important is spending time away with just each other and remembering that they are still a couple along with being parents. All of these things keep this couple going strong for almost three decades.

Beth is another friend I met twenty years ago. We were both teaching in Ipswich, MA. She and her partner, Maria, had been together for seven years, but I had known each other for twenty years having met and traveled in the same circle of friends since 1974. They have been



legally married for the past eight years. When I met Beth, Maria had just survived cancer. At the time I didn't know what kind and once we became friends I never bothered to ask. What did it matter what type it was?

Maria was a survivor. When I asked what made their relationship last, their answer was simple and succinct, "We are truly each other's best friends as well as lovers." I don't think there is a more perfect answer than that.

My wife, Michelle, and I have just celebrated sixteen years together. In June, we will be married for ten years. It's amazing how much we've been through as a couple in less than twenty years. Michelle's mother wouldn't speak to her for quite awhile after Michelle had come out. It just about broke Michelle's heart. Now 'Mama' says that I am the best thing that has ever happened to her daughter. Michelle and I both lost our fathers to cancer. She lost a brother to substance abuse.

In 2003, Michelle was diagnosed with MS. A few years later, barely able to make the bed or tie my own shoes, I was diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis. We've raised three children. Not an easy task considering all that comes with raising children and helping them each cope with their parents' divorces and being stretched between two households. We've moved twice, owned a business, changed jobs, changed careers and just simply changed with age. What has not changed is us.

We are still here and very much in love. What makes us work is really no different than the other couples I've described or those of my straight brothers', sister, in-laws and friends. We deeply love each other. We make each other laugh every day. We don't need Valentines Day to make the other one feel special. We respect each other. And when it comes right down to it, it is one another and no other that we choose to make, waste and spend time with.

I take back my previous statement. We are all remarkable couples. We are remarkable because we are still together having weathered and still weather the normal battles life throws at two people who have committed their lives to one another AND we have had to overcome societal stereotypes, discrimination, and the lack of support heterosexual couples get without the bat of an eye from their community. Our marriages, like all marriages that work, are more than the sum of its whole. But our marriages are superhuman.



Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at Dani-BLangevin@aol.com

Beneath The Surface

Ten Years of Crying Out In the Wilderness

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

When I met Tom Duggan, founder and editor of The Valley Patriot, it was 2004 and I had been producing WCAP's "Saturday Morning Live" with Warren Shaw. One thing we found we had in common was that I had known his father before his untimely passing.

Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. used to protect Jack's Fast Food in Lawrence (now Big n' Beefy) on weekend nights into the wee hours of the morning, and we used to have some good and interesting conversations. I looked forward to hanging with Officer Duggan at work, and my brother in law who owned the restaurant was also good friends with him.

At Tom's request I switched shows and began producing his "Paying Attention" radio program because the hours were much more conducive for me. It wasn't long before I was co-host and challenging many of Tom's presumptions about life, both on the air and off. I had already been hosting a local TV show at the time, and in September of 2004 I began writing for The Valley Patriot.

My first column was a challenge to then presidential candidate John Kerry on something he had said in a presidential debate about becoming "the science president." I think it related to stem cell research. I have been writing monthly columns ever since.

I had thought Tom would rather quickly see how I wrote - challenging the modern project in a no-spin politically incorrect way - and ask me to consider finding another paper for which to write. After all, the modern project of our western world, which is the collective attempt spearheaded by the media and academia to create our own reality in order to avoid conforming to the one that actually exists, has its sacred cows that cannot be challenged.

Rush Limbaugh found this out, Phil Robertson from Duck Dynasty, the Chick Filet people, as well as the folks at Fox News. They all know what not to say to avoid offending the angry culture of denial. Speaking clearly and unambiguously about certain issues today brings out the wrath of the cultural left, a seething anger that lies barely below the surface ready to attack anyone that dares to challenge the lies that uphold the house of cards built in this modern project. Blasphemy against the religion of secular humanism is not

tolerated today; yet there is nothing more important in which to engage. Rather, challenging the movement that has broken down the family and created a culture of death is morally obligatory.

Sadly, this country is into its second generation of believers lost in the cult of secular humanism that has its own terminology, mental constructs, and ideological view of life that militates against truth and happiness. Its characteristic cynicism and utter confusion has led to a radical individualism and isolation, to unprecedented young people committing suicide, and to a general population on medication in order to cope. Breaking through the wall of the man-constructed fortress of false politically correct thinking is an absolute necessity today.

The Valley Patriot allows for this. The paper also allows authors of all stripes to write including those that preach America's new religion of the left with its sacraments of sexual perversion that uphold its central human sacrifice of pre-born children to the god of self. Nevertheless, it is the only publication I know of that does not edit out challenges to this popular deadly cult that has been made so attractive and pervasive by the media and academia.

It has been fun writing for The Valley Patriot Newspaper for the past ten years. Writing this column in union with my TV show, my new radio show on 980 WCAP, Beneath the Surface, and teaching philosophy at the college level, I often feel like the proverbial young boy at the parade who proclaims to the adults, "The emperor is naked!" It has been a blessing to be a part of a newspaper that continues to grow and expand despite being in the era of the internet. May The Valley Patriot evolve in the direction that divine providence has for it, and may the next ten years bring about good fruit to the region of New England that it serves, and beyond.



Paul Murano teaches philosophy and theology at Middlesex Community College, North Shore Community College, and Magdalen College. He is host of Beneath the Surface radio on WCAP (www.facebook.com/fellowtruthseekers), hosts a local TV show, and is co-host of Paying Attention! radio show.

Paul is also founder and chairman of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help in Burlington and is a singer/songwriter/musician.

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Public Records Should Be Accessible
with Penalties for Failure To Comply

Senator Katy O'Connor Ives
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Given this is The Valley Patriot's 10th year anniversary special edition, I would like to highlight legislation in the State House especially relevant to freedom of the press.

Government should have transparency and accountability and the only way to ensure that this is occurring is to have access. Under Chapter 66 Section 10 of the Massachusetts General Law, a custodian has 10 days to comply with a request for public information. However, there are no significant penalties for non-compliance with this law. I filed Senate Bill 1520, "An Act Relative to Obtaining Information," which would implement fines on the custodian of public records for failing to comply after 30 days and until compliance occurs.

In addition, a non-compliant custodian is responsible for any court costs incurred after 60 days of the original request. SB 1520 was heard on October 15, 2013 before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. I am advocating for access to information, available to all within a reasonable time frame and for residents to have recourse in instances where their requests for public information are ignored.

Currently, there are no teeth in the law to hold someone accountable for not fulfilling the request within the mandated time period. News publications experi-

encing difficulty gaining access to public records are often left to incur high attorney fees and navigate the court system in order to get information that should be available to the public.

On Wednesday, March 5 my bill was incorporated in HB 2846 "An Act to Improve Access to Public Records," sponsored by Representative Peter Kocot. HB 2846 makes a number of reforms, including adequately addressing electronic records and its copying costs, as well as awarding attorney fees when the party seeking public records substantially prevails, and implements a fine of not more than \$100 for each day any public officer neglects or refuses to comply with a request. I have made it one of my top priorities as a State Senator to increase government accountability and transparency across the board. This bill will strengthen the public's access to public records and that can only be a good thing. I will continue to work toward the passage of this bill and to advocate for the interests of the Merrimack Valley.



State Senator Ives is a Democrat from Newburyport and represents 1st Essex District, which encompasses Amesbury, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newburyport, Methuen, Salisbury, and portions of North Andover.[1] Before her election to the Massachusetts Senate in 2012, O'Connor Ives was a member of the Newburyport City Council.

Summary of Proposed Changes to
State's Public Records Law

Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight Bill Summary
Bill Number: H. 2846, An Act to improve access to public records.
Sponsor(s): Peter V. Kocot, Anne M. Gobi, Denise Provost, Kathleen O'Connor Ives and others. Hearing Date: October 15, 2013 Current Law: M.G.L. Chapter 4 § 7. Chapter 66 § 3, 6, and 10.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED LAW:
Section 1. Adds the following language to the definition of public record in clause 26 of section 7 of chapter 4: "including public information which may be separately retrieved from an electronic record."

Section 2. Amends section 3 of Chapter 66 by striking the first 2 sentences containing an out dated definition of "records".

Section 3. Amends chapter 66 by adding a new section 3A. Section 3A will require that when designing or acquiring a new electronic recordkeeping system or database the custodian of the public record must ensure that the system is capable of providing date in a common format. In addition, when the information maintained electronically contains both public and information that is exempt from public record, the custodian must ensure a manner of storage and retrieval that segregates public record information in order to ensure maximum public retrieval including ensuring that all contracts entered into do not impair public access to records.

Section 4. Adds a new section 6A to chapter 66 requiring every agency to

designate one or more records access officers to have custody of all public records whose names and pertinent contact information are to be posted conspicuously in offices and on websites. Record access officers shall be responsible for coordinating the agencies response to requests for records and shall ensure that the agency (a) assist requesters in identifying records sought; (b) indicate in response to a request whether the records are available electronically and in what manner the records are stored; (c) contact requesters if the response to a request would be so voluminous and assist in focusing the request so it can be facilitated in a timely manner; and (d) coordinates with the Supervisor of Public Records to ensure records are preserved in accordance with law. Annually updates reference materials including: a reasonably detailed document classification scheme outlining categories of records maintained by the agency, a list of all major databases maintained by the agency and a record of all public records requests. In addition, these reference materials are to be posted annually on the agency's website.

Section 5. Strikes subsection (a) of section 10 of chapter 66 and inserts a new subsection:

Requiring every person having custody of a public record to permit it or any segregable portion to be inspected, and to furnish one copy at no more than actual cost.

Further defines "actual cost" taking into

PUBLIC RECORDS: PAGE 47

Human Interference and the Minimum Wage: A Rodent Love Story

Christine Morabito
CONSERVATIVE COLUMNIST

We asked Christine Morabito to submit her favorite column from the last ten years and we have to agree with her choice. This column was very warmly received by Christine's readers back in July of 2013.

As a former zookeeper and environmental educator, I understand the delicate balance required to sustain any ecosystem. The story of the rat-like nutria, Myocastor coypus, and its invasion of New Orleans, is a perfect example of how humans, convinced they know better, can make a major mess of things. A mere 20 of these 12-pound rodents were brought to Louisiana in the 1930s, in the hopes that they would eat the destructive and invasive vegetation known as the waterhyacinth, Eichhornia crassipes. Not only did the nutria have an aversion to the obnoxious plant, but, being rodents, they bred an estimated 20 million animals within two decades. To this day the waterhyacinth and the nutria share the prize for ecological mayhem, resulting in the destruction of wetlands, displacement of native flora and fauna and reduction in the region's biodiversity.

How does this relate to raising the minimum wage in Massachusetts? Stick with me.

Just as balance is important in fragile ecosystems, the same balance is vital to our American economic system. The free market works beautifully when left largely alone. Humans cannot force major change without affecting every other part of the equation. As in nature, nothing happens in a vacuum.

Increasing the minimum wage to supposedly lift people out of poverty is a lofty goal, which, on the surface, sounds



quite compassionate. However, research brings to light a myriad of unintended consequences and a history of counterproductive results.

In the words of economist, Thomas Sowell: "It would be comforting to believe that the government can simply decree higher pay for low-wage workers, without having to worry about unfortunate repercussions, but the preponderance of evidence indicates that labor is not exempt from the basic economic principle that artificially high prices cause surpluses. In the case of the surplus of human beings, that can be a special tragedy when they are already from low-income, unskilled or minority backgrounds and urgently need to get on the job ladder, if they are ever to move up the ladder by acquiring experience and skills."

Extensive research has proven that increasing the minimum wage not only does not deliver the promise to reduce poverty, but actually causes employers to cut back on both the number of workers they hire

and the working hours per employee.

Massachusetts has a minimum wage rate of \$8.00 per hour, a rate higher than the hourly federal rate of \$7.25. And who is earning this hourly rate? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) the majority of those earning minimum wage are under age 25 and nearly two-thirds of them receive a raise in their first year of employment. Only about 3 percent of employees over age 25 earn minimum wage and 94 percent of them also have a working spouse. So where is the crisis?

The supporters of raising the minimum wage will appeal to your emotions with talk of "fairness" and "social justice." Make no mistake; this is not about helping the poor - it's about political favors.

I attended a hearing at the State House on this issue and was shocked to see a line out to the street and continuing down the next. I naively thought it was fantastic that people were so civically engaged. I soon realized, these were not your garden variety engaged citizens - these folks

were "community organized." People with clipboards buzzed around, handing out talking-points, telling people when to catch their busses and when they would eat lunch.

Inside, there was a sea of purple with SEIU and various other union groups, socialists and anarchists. The proceedings were nothing short of an orchestrated dog and pony show. All testimony in favor of raising the minimum wage was heard first, when the cameras were rolling and it was standing room only. By the time the opponents of the wage hike addressed the committee, the cameras had disappeared and the community organized were long gone.

Why the strong union support? Apparently, a raise in the minimum wage automatically triggers a raise for union workers. Hence all the concern with fairness.

Whether we are dealing with well-intentioned nature lovers or unions and politicians seeking personal gain, the results will be disastrous for the rest of us. The natural solution is for man to stop fixing things and for the free market to determine what wages should be.

It is foolish to intentionally introduce a species with a growth rate among the highest of any plant known to man, or a spectacularly prolific river rat that can produce three litters a year at 13 offspring a pop. But it's downright immoral for our government to force an increase in the minimum wage while duping us into believing it's about fairness.



Christine Morabito is a resident of Haverhill and former President of the Greater Boston Tea Party. You can email her at christine.morabito@hotmail.com



LEFT PHOTO: Lawrence Police Captain Roy Vasque of the Lawrence Police Street Narcotics Unit receiving the Lawrence Exchange Club's Police Officer of the Year Award on behalf of his unit. **Middle Photo,** Lawrence Street Narcotics Unit with Steve Alfano, president of the Exchange (left, back) and Lawrence Police Chief Fitzpatrick (bottom right) and **Photo Right:** Firefighter Frank "Ski" Skusevich who received the Firefighter of the year Award.

Lawrence Exchange Club Honors Valley Heroes

Street Narcotics Enforcement Unit Firefighter of the Year Frank "Ski" Skusevich

The Street Narcotics Unit (SNEU) is a small, highly proactive narcotics unit under the Special Operations Division of the Lawrence Police Department. The unit is dedicated to the eradication of street level drug dealing in the city.

The SNEU targets both the street dealers and the out of state buyers coming to the city to conduct drug transactions. These officers have developed a network of narcotics information through countless hours of investigation, working with citizens and elected officials. These officers use the information they get to identify "hot spots" of drug activity in the city and then attack that area to increase the quality of life for the neighbors who live there.

Through this hard work and dedication

on a daily basis, the unit has been able to accumulate impressive statistics.

For the year 2013, among other statistics, the SNEU made 1,227 arrests, secured 23 illegal firearms and seized approximately \$2.1 million (street value) in illegal narcotics.

For their relentless efforts in the war on drugs in the City of Lawrence, each member of the Street Narcotics Unit received The Lawrence Exchange Club's Police Officer of the Year Award. They are, pictured above in no particular order, Captain Roy Vasque, Lt. Mark Ciccarelli, Detectives David Moynihan, Dean Murphy, Carmen Purpura, Shaun Mclellan, Ryan Guthrie, and Chad Lawlor.

The Lawrence Exchange Club honored EMT's, firefighters and police officers from Andover, North Andover and Lawrence for their contribution to public safety in the Merrimack Valley. The annual award ceremonies were held at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover Wednesday evening, February 26. The event is sponsored by Scott Emerson and Wheelabrator Technologies in North Andover.

The Heroes Next Door - Lawrence Firefighter Frank Skusevich

The Exchange Club honored Lawrence Fire Inspector Frank "Ski" Skusevich, a 25 year veteran firefighter. Skusevich was doing a routine smoke detector inspection in South Lawrence when he heard the call go out on the radio that there was a person in the river at about 10:20 am one Wednesday morning.

"First a special thank you to the Exchange Club and Wheelabrator, it's very nice what you do," said Fire Chief John Marsh.

"My name is John Marsh, proud to be the head counselor at that crazy camp known as the Lawrence Fire Department. Tonight we honor Frank Skusevich,

known as 'Ski', and in the interest of time we will call you Ski from now on.

Marsh recounted how "Ski's had pulled a man out of the Merrimack River in May of 2013 saying that Skusevich had been doing home inspections in South Lawrence when he had heard the radio dispatch that a man was in the river near the falls from a tipped canoe.

While firefighters were trying to respond, Chief Marsh says that they were having problems getting the boat working so "We were already at plan 'B'" the chief said, adding that they were putting on immersion suits and were going to try and reach the man from the water.

"Frank Skusevich was not working with us at the time, he's an inspector and was working up river doing a home inspection [for] smoke detectors, things of that nature. He had no firefighting gear or anything like that, he is in the administrative part of the (department), he was not part of the fire suppression at that time."

"All of a sudden we hear Frank on the radio and he says he is coming down river in a boat. It turns out he had heard it [on

SKI: PAGE 47

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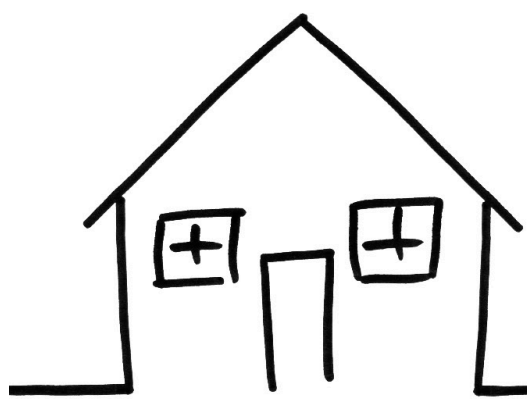
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PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

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45) US Senator Ed Markey, 46) Olympic Softball Pitcher Jenny Finch, 47) THE Ron Kauffman, 48) Dick Morris, 49) Congressman John Tierney, 50) Candidate for Governor, Charlie Baker, 51) 3rd District Congress- man Niki Tsongas & Valley Patriot photographer Rachel Porten, 52) Essex County District Attorney Jon Blodgett, 53) Weatherman Al Kaprelian, 54) Attorney General Martha Coakley 55) Sal Lupoli and Tim Murray, 56) Former Love Boat Captian Galvin McLeod, 57) Former Boston Bruin Captain (and coach) Terry O'Reilly, 58) KISS 108's Matt Segal, 59) New England Patriot's Jarvis Green, 60) Boston Celtics Owner Steve Pagliuca, 61) New England Patriot's Max Lane, 62) Channel 4 Weatherman Barry Burbank, 63) Former Treasurer Tim Cahill, 64) Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon, 65) Former Eagle Tribune Reporter Crystal Bozek 66) Former Lawrence Mayor and VP of Sovereign Bank, Kevin Sullivan, 67) Middlesex County Sheriff Jim DiPaola (deceased), 68) Former Massachusetts Lt. Governor Kerry Healey, 69) Radio Talk Show Host & Author Dennis Prager 70) PuppyGirl Kate Whitney with Honey and Dasher 71) US Senator Elizabeth Warren 72) State Senator Eileen Donohue 73) Essex County Sheriff Frank Cousins 74) Al DiNuccio 75) Red Sox Pitcher Curt Schilling 76) Harlem Globetrotter Firefly Fisher 77) Former Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan with Former Attorney General Tom Reilly 78) Herman Caine with Christine Morabito 79) Radio Legend Jeff Katz at Ground Zero, 80) UMASS Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan, 81) Andover Selectman Alex Vispoli, 82) Kiss 108 FM's Billy Costa, 83) Methuen Mayor Steve Zanni & State Rep. Diana DiZoglio, 84) Sully Erna from GodSmack, 85) Chanel 4's John Keller, 86) Former Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan, 87) Muslims from the Selimiye Mosque in Methuen, 88) Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera & Councilor Eileen Bernal, 89) Massachusetts State Treasurer Steve Grossman 90) Comedian Paulie Shore with Shawn Hansen, 91) Former Louisiana Governor Buddy Roemer, 92) MassGOP, Richard Hersum, Rick Green, Kirsten Hughes and David D'Arcangelo ,93) Christine Morabito with Lt Col. (ret) Allen West.



KickA\$\$ K9s on the Prowl

Thanks To The Valley Patriot

Stacia Gorgone
KICK A\$\$ K9, REVERE

Hi my name is Stacia Gorgone and I founded KickA\$\$ K9 Rescue after my life long best friend, PJ (my Dalmatian), passed away. When PJ died, I realized that I needed to put my animal loving skills to work along with my social butterfly skills to get some doggies saved. So, I started a dog rescue with my closest friends hoping to just try and save a few puppies at a time. Before I knew it, my rescue had a waiting list of people wanting to adopt and a list of volunteers that wanted to help.

One day a stray Rottweiler walked right in front of my car, so I contacted my friend Kevin from Malden Animal Control who introduced me to his friend Melissa. Melissa owns her own doggie day care called The Dog Mother in Peabody. After we helped that stray dog, we decided to network together to help rescue more dogs and reach out to more dog lovers who want to adopt a shelter dog.

Working with animals is extremely hard work, but it's amazingly rewarding for the families and animals that need loving homes. It isn't always about just finding a good home for abandoned animals, it's about taking them in and making sure the situation makes everyone in your house-

hold comfortable, including your dog! For instance, a local police officer recently contacted me to help his mother's dog. She had dementia and couldn't care for the dog any longer, she was very upset about giving up the dog she loved and didn't understand what was happening. So, I offered to meet her myself with the hopes I could help her feel more comfortable about what was going on. I won't lie, it was extremely heart-breaking. It's always tough when dealing with a senior dog, but I can happily report that Dewey is doing great in a loving new home that understands Dewey's needs and background.

Now, running a rescue isn't all fur and barks let me tell ya.... It comes with its share of drama too. And I'm not talking about the drama between my group of rescue friends and other rescue groups but from state agencies that not many people know exist. These agencies are trying to limit the options of Massachusetts residents on animal adoption.

What they want to do is use executive departments of the state to dictate, without a vote of the legislature, what "they" see fit for Massachusetts residents, which is: making sure everyone purchases an animal from a breeder instead of getting one from a dog rescue.

KICK A\$\$ K9: PAGE 40



Local businesswoman Tracey Zysk of North Andover receiving her award from the North Andover Merchant's Association with Selectman Tracy Watson and North Andover State Representative Diana DiZoglio

Animal Advocates, Politicians, and The Valley Patriot

Tracey Zysk
DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Over four years ago, I placed a business card size ad in The Valley Patriot. The calls were coming in and clients started signing up for my services. During that time, Tom being Tom, started asking around North Andover, "Who is this Tracey that owns Wiggles & Jiggles?" People were telling him, "She is a dog walker but she is also an animal advocate. Tracey digs into issues and really fights the battle for animals."

Then I got the phone call...you know, THAT Tom Duggan phone call. "Tracey, Tom Duggan, Valley Patriot, meet me at Joe's Landing, I would like to talk to you." I admit it, I was nervous, knowing Tom and his straight to the gut approach, I was literally questioning everything I had done and who I may have spoken with. Friends and residents of North Andover all said the same, "Tracey, either he thinks your're cute or you really, really made someone mad!" Oh boy...I was baffled and anxiously waited for him at Joe's.

We met and his first words to me were, "Heard you're a straight shooter with a backbone and really put yourself out there." At that point, I felt my face turn beat red and had no clue what he was referring to. He then said, "Ya know, animal advocate stuff." With a sigh of relief, I took a deep breath and relaxed. Tom then asked me to join the paper and write about animal rights, concerns and local events. He wanted me to bring in some debatable issues and cause some conversation on the pet care page. From there the journey began.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to meet and build relationships with



Andover State Representative Jim Lyons and Valley Patriot Doggie Columnist Tracey Zysk of Wiggles and Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover.

local and state politicians. I have interviewed a few for The Valley Patriot, and I have made attempts to interview others. Of course, the ones that have ignored my requests had never really been a fan of The Valley Patriot or of Tom Duggan. In fact, Tom had called those individuals out publically on some sort of shenanigans they took part in, so I wasn't surprised with their lack of response.

My articles started. My first article was about the North Andover Police K-9 unit. This led into a series of articles over the years regarding funding for police dogs, K-9 dogs rights, to the day-to-day lives of our local and State police K-9's.

Devocalization Bill: Tom let me really push my personal beliefs on this. Some of the details were graphic and most certainly not easy to read. However, I wanted this bill to pass and I was determined to do my part. Animal advocates around the state kept the chatter going. Our own Senator, Bruce Tarr, listened to the people and worked endlessly to make sure this

ZYSK: PAGE 41

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Congratulations to
THE VALLEY PATRIOT!
on Your 10th Anniversary

From one Patriot to another, I want to thank Tom Duggan, Ralph Wilbur, Dr. Charles Ormsby and The Valley Patriot Team for publishing REAL news and holding public officials accountable without injecting an editorial slant into your coverage.

Thank you for showing the other so called "news" papers what real journalism and an objective, free press is really all about! You are true Patriots of the Republic, for you not only take advantage of your 1st Amendment right, you provide a vehicle for others to express their views without regard for the opinions they are expressing!

THANK YOU!

Your Friend, Tom Weaver



Lights in Lowell a lot Dimmer

Frank McCabe
980WCAP RADIO HOST

The City of Lowell is a darker place today. This week we said goodbye to one of its brightest stars, Tom McKay. Tom McKay was one of the most recognizable, active and socially responsible citizens in this city’s history. I could write a whole lot of words outlining all of Tom’s professional accolades as a businessman, entrepreneur, and philanthropist over the past 50 years, but I want to tell you about the man.

If you did not know Tom, I honestly feel bad for you. Tom was one of the most electric personalities you could ever meet. When Tom McKay walked in to a room, you knew it. He lit it up. I am not sure whether it was his big Irish smile, his always dapper appearance or that unmistakable voice?

I am not sure it was any of those things. Tom just had “presence”. And when you had the great fortune of being in Tom’s presence, you knew you were about to be entertained.

Tom had an uncanny ability to make everyone around him feel welcomed. As one of my family’s closest and oldest friends, I had the luxury of being around Tom my entire life and I can say with conviction; it was always an ‘event’.

“How ah ya, buddy?” was one of Tom’s signature greetings when he reached to shake your hand.

Many have joked that Tom called everyone ‘buddy’ because he could not remember your name. The irony is Tom McKay was everybody’s buddy. He really was. Tom lured followers and friends like the Pied Piper.

Perhaps the greatest story teller I have ever known, Tom’s charisma was captivating and you did not want to miss one



minute of his wit and banter. Tom had a story (some may have been exaggerated) for every occasion and every audience. All of them were priceless. If stories can be considered gifts, then Tom was Santa Claus.

A devout Catholic, Tom was always one to give his time, energy and resources to those in need. When it came to charity and giving, Tom never said the word ‘no’. Both personally and professionally, Tom gave to any worthy cause that crossed his path.

While Tom led a very busy professional life, he was a family man to the core and they were always his first priority. His devotion and affection for his wife Lori and daughters Jennifer and Meredith were unwavering and always obvious. Tom was blessed with two beautiful granddaughters and in his last days, another blessing came in to Tom’s world, his first grandson, James THOMAS. Oh the stories you will hear, Little “T”.

Yes, the city of Lowell and beyond is a darker place, but the Kingdom of Heaven is surely brighter with Tom in it.

Rest easy, Buddy, we all loved ya.



Lowell’s Window to the World

John Macdonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

Anyone who knows even a little about economic development realizes that a downtown represents what is interpreted as the city or town’s window to the world... anywhere. The hustle and bustle, cleanliness and visual appeal of the downtown is the lasting impression people from outside communities absorb.

Very few people who visit a town or city for a day or night out, infrequently see other parts of the community, so the downtown is in fact the community’s image. When it comes to economic development the epicenter of the discussion in Lowell, Massachusetts is indeed the downtown.

Lowell is a place that has a lot of advantages that many other communities don’t have. The Tsongas Arena, Lowell Memorial Auditorium, regionally known festivals, a national park to name a few. Lowell is home to UMass Lowell, which is now providing the region with a NCAA Division 1 sports scene. So the obvious question is why downtown Lowell appears to be in somewhat of a decline with closing businesses?

It’s a question that the new Mayor of Lowell Rodney Elliott and newly elected City Councilor Corey Belanger, Chairman of the Economic Development subcommittee are asking and seek to solve.

When then candidate for Lowell City Council Corey Belanger was running for office, he asked dozens of businesses downtown what was the main reason the downtown seemed to struggle? The overwhelming response to that question was the location of Lowell High School, which is planted in the heart of Lowell’s downtown district. Businesses owner’s claim to Belanger was that Lowell High School was a major contributor to traffic congestions two times a day. The other comment was when the high school emptied at the end of the day, students really didn’t have a disposable income to make a positive financial impact on business owners, which is needed to make a sustainable business in the downtown area. The message... if you’re going to clog our city streets with traffic and students, then it better be positive! Others made the assertion that although rents seemed reasonable, the location of the High School combined with a high business tax rate was the reason businesses opened and quickly closed.

Councilor Rodney Elliott also has seen a pattern in the downtown that makes him concerned and has been expressing his views weekly at Lowell City Council for years on his concerns of the downtown. As Mayor, Elliott has now taken the bull by the horns and appointed Councilor Belanger to

mount an economic development campaign centered on discussion and action, to turn the fortunes of Lowell’s downtown around.

“We have enough 20 year plans in this city! We need to do something now! Businesses need help!” has been the frequent words of Councilor Belanger. Owner of his own downtown business, Belanger see’s the effects and lack of immediate action on a daily basis. Sure, Lowell has an organization called the Lowell Plan that was charged with focusing on economic development for the last twenty years. The Lowell Plan has been at the forefront of major studies for the long term plans of Lowell’s downtown. The Lowell Plan has made an important impact in many instances, but for some of those businesses downtown, they feel they need immediate help and additional voices at the forefront of these economic issues.

In a recent radio broadcast on 980AM WCAP, radio personality and downtown business owner Teddy Panos held the radio stations first Economic Development Forum. A panel made up of well-known business people from Lowell and key developers, were featured in a discussion on downtown Lowell. The panel expressed their opinions on the key to the downtown’s success for the next fifty years. The overwhelming majority of the panel focused on two issues. One was the business tax rate and the other, moving Lowell High School from downtown.

Finally, a serious discussion will take place with what this writer hopes will be with many voices rather than a selected few. Something needs to change in downtown Lowell. The contribution of voices, both pro and con to the fate of Lowell High School’s location and the business tax rate will be critical moving forward in a positive manner. A good friend and mentor, who knows a thing or two about economic development frequently said to me through the years... People eat with their eyes and consume what they see.

Perhaps it’s time for some to work on issues that’s in front of them, rather than what’s projected to take place twenty years from now.



John Macdonald is the President/CEO of Big Decisions, LLC, which is a management consulting business that concentrates on offering strategic advice on Marketing, Public Relations, Economic/ Business Development and Social Media. John has a long career of success, achieving record results in the communications field and spending over 20 years managing marketing budgets, driving the bottom line in the financial services, restaurant, retail and real estate industries.

LOWELL’S LAST GOOD TIME

By Steven C. Panagiotakos

Lowell’s last good time...was had that day
The final show of McCarthy... Creegan and McKay
On show night at the Auditorium... the downtown flourished
Like the glory years of Lowell... the locals were encouraged
They brought the best acts... to play on our stage
“Right here in Lowell”... the people were proud to say

Terry knew the numbers... a keen business mind
Leo was the negotiator... the strong, persuasive type
And when you entered the doors... greeting you right up front
Was good ole’ Tom... with a handshake or a hug

It was Buddy Boy and Baby Doll... to all the guys and gals
And an inside joke or story... for his real good pals
He made everyone feel special... like the toast of the town
You were in for quite an evening... when you fell under Tom’s spell

The talent could be a challenge... even to his people skills
But Tom got them all to show time... without a measure of ill will
He kept Engelbert from strangling... one of our esteemed trustees
And revived Willy Nelson ... from a stoned cold sleep
Graduation and recitals ...he made sure were special days
The Pops and the Gloves ... helped keep the winter blues away

From Belvedere to Centralville...the Highlands and Ayer City
Across Pawtucketville, the Acre, South Lowell and Swede Village
Our hearts are a little heavier...our smiles not quite as wide
It’s the end of an era...the end of a truly wonderful, wonderful ride

Lowell’s last good time... was had that day
But thank God for the memories... for they will remain
“The show must go on” ... is an old popular refrain
But without our friend Tom... it could never be the same
Lowell’s last good time...was had that day

2006 NEW ENGLAND PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARD WINNING ARTICLE

RED CROSS NIGHTMARE

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER/PUBLISHER

JUNE, 2006 - Flood victims from Lawrence, North Andover and Methuen who were staying at the Red Cross shelter in Methuen during the immediate aftermath of last month's flood say that they were treated so badly by the National Red Cross that their view of the organization has been shattered forever.

The devastating flood that displaced thousands of Merrimack Valley residents last month caused many people to rely on organizations like the Red Cross. But, just days after National Red Cross officials descended onto Methuen High school to replace local volunteers, the Red Cross tried to skip town and toss more than 63 homeless people out on the streets.

"We were under the impression that the Red Cross was trying to find us a place to live the whole time we were here," said Rocio Mercado of Holly Street in Lawrence.

"But for ten days they didn't do a thing to help us find housing. Then last night they came out with a cake that said 'Good Bye and Good Luck.' Then they announced that the shelter was closing today (May 24) at 3pm and the doors would be locked. We were devastated because we have no place to go. We wasted ten days thinking the Red Cross was doing something and now they are throwing us out on the streets."

Eviction signs were put on the walls of the gymnasium by the Red Cross, informing flood victims that they had to be out of the building by Wednesday May 24th at 3pm.

Flood victims began to panic thinking they were about to be homeless again. National Red Cross officials had packed up flood victims' personal belongings, placed everything in boxes and plastic bags and put their items on the sidewalk, while other Red Cross officials loaded up a Budget rental van with supplies.

Lawrence Planning Director Michael Sweeney, appointed by Mayor Sullivan as the disaster relief coordinator for the city of Lawrence, said he had been communicating with the Red Cross during the flood and the aftermath of the cleanup. But Sweeney said that throughout the ten days following the flood, the National Red Cross "never once told city officials that they would not try to find housing for people who ended up homeless because of the flood."

"If they had just given us that information in the first place, the city of Lawrence would have had people making phone calls to find housing for these people," Sweeney said. "Instead, the Red Cross simply announced to people that the shelter was closing ...good bye, and good luck."

Contacted by The Valley Patriot, one



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28 Pages

Red Cross Nightmare

Tom Duggan

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Continued on Page 8

Lawrence Residents staying at the Red Cross shelter in Methuen had their belongings put on the sidewalk in plastic garbage bags and told not to return. The National Red Cross decided they were skipping town at 3 p.m. on May 24th. Lawrence and Methuen officials had to intervene to stop them from closing the shelter.



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Haverhill Mayor

Jim Fiorentini

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official from the National Red Cross said that they were closing the shelter on May 24th because Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi "wants us out right away."

Mayor Manzi disputed that account saying it was his understanding that the Red Cross was going to stay until every flood victim had a place to stay.

Mayor Manzi, Police Chief Joe Solomon and Superintendent Phil Littlefield went down to the shelter on May 24th where they were joined by Michael Sweeney and Lawrence Personnel Director Frank Bonet to confront the Red Cross and make it clear that they wanted the shelter to remain open until all flood victims found safe housing.

That's when Red Cross officials changed their tune and assured city officials from both municipalities that the shelter would remain open until everyone was relocated.

"Look, it's been a total nightmare over there at that shelter," Sweeney said.

"We got a call from some of the Lawrence families staying at the shelter, crying, saying they were being thrown out on the street this morning with no place to go. Last week this shelter turned away a blind man because they said he had some special need and they could not accommodate him. The only need this guy had was a need to find some place to sleep and they literally turned him away."

According to Red Cross Spokesperson Gorge Drumbor, the Red Cross provides first and last month's rent as well as a security deposit, but "the flood victims themselves are responsible for calling

landlords and finding a place to live."

"We only facilitate here," Drumbor said. "We can put victims in touch with other agencies that can help them find placement but, as a policy, we do not do that."

"That would have been a pretty good thing to tell us ten days ago," Sweeney responded. "In fact, on Monday and Tuesday (May 22 & 23), officials from the Red Cross told me and Mr. Bonet the exact opposite, and assured us they would not close the shelter until everyone was placed in a safe living situation. They simply lied to us and mistreated people."

Asked why a blind man was turned away last week when there was clearly plenty of room at the shelter for him, Drumbor said that he did not know the specifics of the incident, but that it was his understanding that someone from the Red Cross was trying to find another shelter that could accommodate his needs. According to Drumbor, the Red Cross does not help individuals with special needs.

Drumbor also denied that anyone was being thrown out of the shelter on Wednesday, May 24th. "It was only an internal target to have these people out of the shelter and placed by today, Drumbor said. "We never told them they had to

leave and we would not have thrown them out on the streets."

While Drumbor was answering that question, Red Cross officials were in the process of ripping down signs at the shelter and demanding that residents of the shelter vacate the premises by 3pm. Asked why signs were posted informing people they had to leave by 3pm, Drumbor said he didn't have



Jessie and Roscio Mercado of Holly Street in Lawrence had no place to go when their home was flooded and then condemned. The National Red Cross tried to throw them out on the street without so much as making a phone call to help them find shelter.

an answer.

"How are people with no phones and no transportation supposed to call landlords, find a place to stay, get a letter from the landlord so they can get the Red Cross vouchers for the rent, and then bring it back here to the shelter"? Sweeney asked. "It's total insanity."

According to Lawrence Mayor Mi-

TOP OF NEXT PAGE



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

At 10 a.m., May 24th, the National Red Cross was loading their supplies into a Budget rental van, ready to skip town while Lawrence and Methuen residents were left on the sidewalk wondering what to do next.

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FROM PREVIOUS PAGE: RED CROSS NIGHTMARE

chael Sullivan's office, officials from the city of Lawrence had "tasked people to make phone calls immediately after finding out the Red Cross was trying to skip town and leave these people in the streets."

"It has been horrible every time I talk to someone who tells me they are in charge and I start to explain the dire need of these victims. But as soon as I ask them to make a command decision, suddenly I am told I have to talk to someone else. It's no wonder there were so many problems in New Orleans after Katrina. This is the problem, the National Red Cross."

"This is all because of red tape," Jessie Mercado added. "It's all about the policies and the politics. We just need a place to stay and we have no way to get around."

Mercado and his wife Rocio said things at the shelter were going "OK" until "the local [Red Cross] people were no longer in charge. As soon as the people from out of state came in and took over, everything changed."

Both Rocio and Jessie Mercado said that they were "very grateful to the mayor of Methuen and the people of Methuen" for housing them at the high school. "We heard that the mayor is getting blamed for trying to have us thrown out of the shelter before we could find a place to live. That's just not right. We are not even from Methuen and they have done so much for us, we are very grateful."

Methuen Mayor Manzi said that he, along with Sweeney and Bonet, were personally making sure nobody gets thrown out of the shelter and that "they can stay there as long as they need to."

State Representative Willie Lantigua tried to mediate between the different officials and the flood victims, some of whom did not speak English. After several private discussions with various officials, Representative Lantigua announced to the flood victims that they would be permitted to stay in the shelter, and assured them that "the situation was now under control."

Red Cross officials, on the other hand, tried to spin the story telling residents of the shelter that it was "all a miscommunication," adding that they were "happy to stay and help them any way they could."

Officials would not say how much donation money the Red Cross has received for the devastating flood that affected most of the Merrimack Valley for more than ten days.

Ironically, officials from the city of Lawrence were able to find housing for all but one family living in the shelter within 48 hours of finding out that the Red Cross was not helping people find a place to live.

"We were able to accommodate every family that was stuck in the Red Cross shelter by either getting them into temporary apartments, permanent housing or in some cases we were able to get them into hotels," said Personnel Director Frank Bonet.

*THIS STORY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF MIKE SWEENEY.



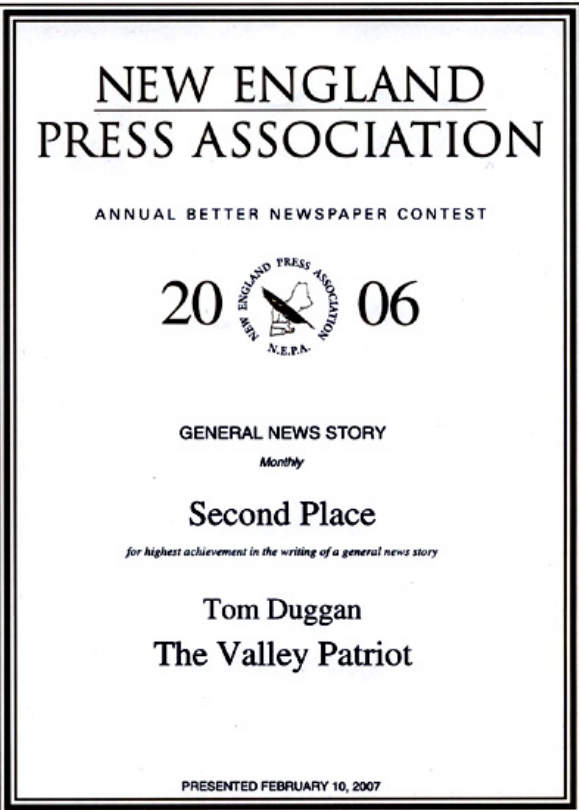
Lawrence Planning Director Michael Sweeney (left) explains to George Drumbor from the National Red Cross that their plan to "skip town" and leave Lawrence residents on the streets was "unacceptable." To the right of Drumbor is Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi, Lawrence Personnel Director Frank Bonet and State Rep. Willie Lantigua.



Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi and Lawrence State Rep. Willie Lantigua showed up at the Red Cross shelter at Methuen High School to find out why Red Cross officials were throwing flood victims out onto the streets. Within minutes, National Red Cross officials were back-peddling and telling flood victims that they could stay "until everyone is placed."



On hand to watch The Valley Patriot receive an award from the New England Press Association were (Standing): Quianna Roy, Frank Incropera, Diane Brennan and Mark Hersum. Sitting: Dotti Incropera, Colleen Flanigan, Dr. Charles Ormsby, Ted Trip, and Lonnie Brennan



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A Timeless Collection of Beauty Captured in Photography at Sweethaven Studio

Rebecca Pearson
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Sweethaven Studio is the dream of Greg Nikas, and specializes in portraits of families, children, and high school senior portraits located in downtown Newburyport. At Sweethaven Studio, their goal is to deliver the highest quality photographic portraits available.

Your portrait session may be photographed in our studio, your favorite location or in the comfort of your home.

There are also many beautiful locations in and around the Newburyport area that they can recommend to help you have a lasting memory for all occasions.

If there is one thing you should know about Greg is that he lives and breathes photography. He will never admit it, but he has over 20 years experience working as a professional photographer offering you and your family the best in photography care.

Sweethaven Seniors is dedicated to providing awesome portraits to high school juniors for their senior yearbook, graduation announcement and party invitation photos. They also offer three levels



of service so you can get exactly what you want for the price that is perfect for you.

Sweethaven Gallery located on Inn Street also features the landscape photographs of Newburyport and Plum Island of Greg Nikas, who has been photographing the world around him since he was a young man growing up in Ipswich, MA. From those early days until the present, his work has brought him much recognition in the commercial photography world. Greg is a long time member of the prestigious photographic community of The



American Society of Media Photographers where he walks side by side with many of the world's finest professionals. Time and time again, Greg has returned to the landscape as nourishment for his creative soul. His images are deeply personal and are often compared to fine art.

Visit Sweethaven Gallery located at 25L Inn Street in Newburyport, MA and enjoy his amazing talent of photography that has captured moments of people's lives for over 20 years.

Arts and Entertainment for the Month

of March in Newburyport, MA:

Firehouse Center for the Arts, Merrimack Street, Newburyport, www.Firehouse.org

Seussical, Jr. Fri-Sun, March 7-9: Horton, the Cat in the Hat, and all your favorite Dr. Seuss characters spring to life onstage.

Variety Tonight, Thurs, March 13: Your host Johnny Budzyna will take you on a journey of singing & comedy - one night only!

All in the Timing, March 21-22 and 28-29: Firehouse Announces Our Spring Production! A series of hilarious one-act plays by David Ives.

17 State Street Café, 17 State Street, Newburyport, www.17StateStreetCafe.com

Hellcat Choir – Irish Live Music March 14, 7-9pm

Sheila Linehan – Irish Live Music March 15, 7-9pm

Joe Hanley Live Music March 21, 7-9pm

Merrimack Hat Company Live Music March 22, 7-9:30 pm

Mark Mandeville & Raianne-Richards March 29, 7-9:30 pm



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Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt Opens In Salem NH

SALEM, N.H.- Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt, one of the fastest-growing self-serve frozen dessert franchises, opened a store late March in the new Tri-City Common located at the intersection of Route 97 and Hampstead Road in Salem, N.H. Orange Leaf will join New CVS Center and Haverhill Bank at 390 Main St, Salem, NH.

Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt will utilize the leased space as its popular self-serve dessert concept and fill a void at the shopping center and in the community for a frozen yogurt store.

Owner Hem Vora said he and his partners are very excited to have an Orange Leaf in Salem.

"We plan on being very involved and in touch with the community," Vora said. "We look forward to connecting with the people and hosting fundraisers with the local organizations."

About Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt

Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt is a self-serve, choose-your-own-toppings frozen dessert chain with more than 300 locations in the U.S. and Australia. Ranked one of the fastest growing limited service chains by Technomic and as one of the top three new franchises for 2013 by Entrepreneur, Orange Leaf's pro-franchisee culture encourages owners to become a part of their communities and provides them



with the necessary ingredients for success. Orange Leaf offers a multitude of delicious, traditional and original flavors, including no-sugar-added, gluten-free and dairy-free alternatives. Customized with a generous selection of do-it-yourself toppings, Orange Leaf provides an innocent indulgence, self-served in a stimulating atmosphere. For more information and franchise opportunities, visit www.orangeleafyogurt.com, like Orange Leaf Yogurt on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter @myorangeleaf.

Dissolution of Crimeline of Southern New Hampshire

At a meeting on February 4, 2014, the Board of Directors of Crimeline of Southern New Hampshire made the decision to cease all operations of Crimeline. The anonymous telephone tip line and the web site will immediately be disconnected.

Salem Crimeline began in 1984 and initially was successful enough that in 1995 it expanded to the communities of Derry, Londonderry and Windham. It was renamed Crimeline of Southern New Hampshire.

During its 30 years of existence, Crimeline's anonymous tip line provided valuable information to police investigators, who solved approximately 70 cases, convicted 42 defendants, recovered \$71,000 of stolen property and \$37,000 of narcotics.

Tipsters were rewarded in cash and remained anonymous. The past success of Crimeline was a direct result of the combined cooperation and support of concerned citizens, businesses, social groups, local police departments and the news media.

Crimeline of Southern New Hampshire would like to thank everyone involved in

the operations over the years that helped to make it such a success. Despite the best efforts of the Directors and intense publicity by the news media, unfortunately the lack of tips over the past few years has made the program dwindle leading to the decision to cease all operational efforts associated with Crimeline of Southern, NH.

The remaining monies in the reward pool will be split between Relay for Life and the Upper Room (501(c) (3) organizations) as soon as the required legal paperwork has been completed.

Crimeline appreciates the efforts of Tom Duggan, Valley Patriot News in finding the space to publish the monthly Crimeline articles.

Crimeline would also especially like to thank Joyce Chadwell, Derry Police Dept. and Salem Detectives M. Kelly and T. Kench and Patrolman Matt Norcross for providing Crimeline with monthly crime reports for publication and their time and support of Crimeline.

The Board of Directors of Crimeline of Southern, NH unanimously voted for the dissolution of this organization. This announcement was written by Ron Penczak.

Bettencourt's retirement marks the end of an era on the field and in the classroom

D.J. Bettencourt

VALLEY PATRIOT NEW HAMPSHIRE COLUMNIST

While this special 10th Anniversary edition of The Valley Patriot represents a wonderful accomplishment for this publication, it also represents a personal milestone for the Bettencourt family. This month, the career of a man who is both very special to me and the Merrimack Valley region came to a close. After 37 years in education, my dad, better known to most as Coach Bettencourt enjoyed his last day in the classroom.

Growing up, my dad wanted to be a lawyer. Being raised in a large family provided him effective training in argumentation and the profession promised an attractive salary. Wealth was not a luxury my dad experienced during his younger years in Peabody, MA. But it was in that humble upbringing that he found his love of athletics. Sports, especially baseball, provided inexpensive opportunities to exercise his competitive spirit.

After immensely successful careers in baseball and football at Peabody High School and the University of New Hampshire, where he was an All-American, my dad faced the fork in the road that all amateur athletes eventually face—"what's next?"

He returned to the North Shore to find answers and was offered a substitute teaching and assistant football coaching position at North Reading High School. It was there that he discovered that the ball field was simply an extension of the classroom. In both arenas, teaching was the centerpiece and effective teachers could make a real difference in an individual's life.

From there, he went on to teach at Central Catholic. Central provided him with his first head coaching job, allowing him to take over the baseball program in the highly competitive Merrimack Valley Conference. It was the perfect place for a young coach to cut his teeth and experience inevitable growing pains. It also was his first of dozens of Merrimack Valley Coach of the Year honors.

But it was at Andover school system and the University of New Hampshire that he would experience his greatest successes and spend the majority of his educational career. In the late 80s, he took over the Golden Warrior program at Andover High. His time there would include four Massachusetts State championships.

In 1993, he took his career to the collegiate level taking over the struggling UNH baseball program. His first year there, the Wildcats earned their first winning season in a decade and he earned Atlantic 10 Coach of the Year honors. Staying in New Hampshire, he coached at Salem

and Winnacunnet High Schools winning a New Hampshire state championship in the process and became one of the few high school coaches in New England history to win state championships in two states.

To be sure, his teaching and coaching style weren't for everyone. He took a no-nonsense approach and refused to accept excuses or laziness. He demanded more from students and players than they thought they were capable of producing. He demanded results. To him, teaching was the same as coaching. The arenas may be different but the principles are the same. They were the values that caused his son to become a conservative Republican. Such an approach frequently chaffed against the emerging political correctness that has since overwhelmed our educational and athletic programs.

But despite this rough demeanor, few cared more about their students and players as individuals than my dad. No matter what happened on the field, my dad was always their biggest fan and was only a phone call away if something was wrong.

Dave Bettencourt's retirement from teaching is not the only era that has concluded. It is unlikely that high school athletics in New England will ever again see the likes of Coach Bettencourt. Union rules in public education dictate preferences in coaching positions to internal candidates, usually teachers in the system. Coaching experience, success, and effectiveness have taken a back seat to uncontroversial coaches who keep parents and administrators happy. My dad's retirement not only closes the chapter on his teaching career, but on a no-nonsense brand of coaching in high school athletics.

The next chapter of my dad's life will certainly include teaching and mentoring, along with some quality time with his adoring granddaughter, Ava. Offers to join Major League Baseball as a coach or scout have been considered. But whatever the future holds, his legacy will be the positive impact he has had in the lives of his students and players and the joy he feels when they succeed in sports or in life.

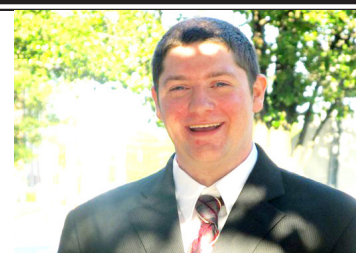
On behalf of mom, Katie, Shannon, Ava and thousands of former students and players, we love you dad.



D.J. Bettencourt served as a State Representative in the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 2005 to 2012 and was the House Majority Leader for the 2011-2012 legislative term. He currently works as

the Director of Development and Community Relations at the Salem Animal Rescue League

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Gary Mannion, Jr.

Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee

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God Bless America

Long before I ever ran for office I was a loyal reader of The Valley Patriot. As the Lawrence City Council President, and now a State Representative, I find it vital to keeping up with what's going on in my district. Tommy, Ralph and Chuck, Congratulations on hitting yet another milestone, your 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

Here's hoping for many more!



Frank Moran reading the Valley Patriot in 2004

HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

FRANK MORAN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY VALLEY PATRIOT !



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Patrolman's Association
& The Methuen Police
Superior Officers Association**

For the last ten years The Valley Patriot has shown an undying commitment to law enforcement and it has not gone unnoticed by those of us who wear the uniform. From the men and women of the Methuen Police Patrolman's Association and the Methuen Police Superior Officers Association we want to say THANK YOU to Tom Duggan and everyone at The Valley Patriot. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed by those of us who are charged with protecting and serving the public! Thank you for objectively reporting the truth in an industry that should take notes from your success.

School Committee Bills Taxpayers for Fine Dining

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER/PUBLISHER
PUBLISHED MARCH 2004

For the past three years members of the Lawrence School Committee have been billing the taxpayers for plush dining at the city's most expensive restaurant: One Mill Street.

Then School Committeemen Noah Shannon, Pedro Arce, Suzanne Piscitello, Nancy Kennedy and current member George Gonzalez all dined with Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy and his staff after school board meetings running up tabs worth over \$1,200.00.

Documents obtained by The Valley Patriot show that state taxpayers treated members of the Lawrence School Committee to more than a dozen expensive meals between 2001-2003.

Meal reimbursement receipts show School Board members helped themselves to veal, sirloin steak, calamari, pork chops, duck, steak salad, garlic shrimp, mussels, scallops, spinach chicken, assorted appetizers and other various menu items. The meals were then billed to the Lawrence Public Schools which receives 100% of it's funding from the state and federal government.

While Superintendent Laboy's \$156,000 a year contract does not include a meal allowance, he says that some of his expenses are reimbursable. "I don't have a meal allowance but it is accepted practice for me to be reimbursed for certain expenses as long as they are reasonable and sensible," he said.

School Committee members, on the other hand, do not have that luxury. According to the School Committee policy (B-18) "School Committee members shall receive no compensation for their services. However, upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, Committee members may be reimbursed from district funds." This never took place regarding meal receipts from One Mill Street.

Instead, some School Committee members took advantage of their position as members of the School Committee Finance subcommittee by eating at One Mill Street and then signed off on the meal receipts as legitimate educational expenses.

Laboy said he submitted the School Committee meal receipts because it was the least he could do for them. "These people (School Committee members) put in a lot of hours and they work very hard for our children. I think buying them a meal is the least we can do for them after a long meeting. The School Committee members are not compensated in any way, shape or form for their service. I don't

LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

EXPENSE REQUEST*

NAME Wilfredo T. Laboy DATE 2/4/02

SCHOOL Central Office

GRADE/OR SUBJECT Superintendent

PURPOSE OF EXPENSE REQUEST: School Committee meeting / discussion @ One Mill Street on 1/31/01

OUT-OF-STATE REQUEST INFORMATION

ONE MILL STREET
@ ONE MILL STREET
(978) 738-8900

2655 GS
JAN09'03 9:03PM

@ 8.00

CALAMARI W/ MOJO 16.00

ARTICHOKES 8.00

PORK CHOP @ 18.00 54.00

VF...IE SAND 8.00

NEW YORK STRIP 19.00

18.00 %

GRATUITY 18.90

FOOD TOTAL 105.00

SVC CHG TOTAL 18.90

TAX 5.25

TOTAL DUE \$ 129.15

FINAL EXPENSES

Conference, Workshop Fees: \$

Meal(s) \$141.25

Lodging

Food

ONE MILL STREET
@ ONE MILL STREET
(978) 738-8900

CHARRISSA

2487 GST 14
DEC13'01 8:49PM

FRENCH ONION 5.00

SPICY CHIX WINGS 7.00

@ 8.00

CALAMARI W/ MOJO 16.00

@ 9.00

GARLIC SHRIMP 18.00

SCRITO MUSSELS 8.00

CUP DU JOUR 3.00

NEW YORK STRIP 19.00

SALMON 17.00

CAESAR CHICKEN 9.00

CAESAR SALAD 6.00

PORK CHOP 17.00

GREENS W/ VINAIG 8.00

0 RINGS

MISC FOOD

COCO MANGO

HOMEMADE ICE CRM 5.00

18.00 %


GRATUITY 24.00

FOOD TOTAL 137.00

SVC CHG TOTAL 24.66

TAX 8.08

TOTAL DUE \$ 169.74



"...the Ethics Commission should be informed about this. They should pay back every penny with interest and issue a written apology to the school children and the citizens of Lawrence."

Michael Sweeney
Lawrence School Committee

find it offensive or excessive to pay for a person's meal when they work so hard."

The problem is, Laboy didn't pay for the meal, state taxpayers did; a fact that angered some current board members who demanded repayment for the meals. School Committeeman Michael Sweeney said "each member who received a free meal should pay back every penny to the children of Lawrence."

"I think their actions are reprehensible," Sweeney said of Piscitello, Gonzalez, Shannon, Kennedy and Arce. "Particularly Ms. Piscitello. Of all people, she should be writing a check out to the school department for everything she ate. I also think the Ethics Commission should be informed about this. They should pay the money back with interest and issue a written apology to the school children and the citizens of Lawrence."

On at least one occasion, a quorum of

the School Committee (six of the seven members) met at One Mill Street for what Laboy listed on receipts as a "School Committee meeting/Discussion at One Mill Street." (see right) With a majority of the board present, Laboy admitted the meeting was not publicly posted as required by the state's open meeting law because, he said, "it was a social event."

Asked why he submitted meal receipts to the taxpayers totaling \$141.25 for a "social" gathering he admitted, "It was partially business. Business was discussed."

Mayor Michael Sullivan who sits as chairman of the School Committee said he doesn't believe Superintendent Laboy did anything wrong, however, he added, "I think the members of the finance committee who signed off on those warrants should pay the money back. Absolutely."

"I don't think it's appropriate. As political leaders we have to be held to a higher standard. If it is outside the educational setting it isn't right that their meals should be treated by the taxpayers."

Sullivan said that the School Committee policy must be adhered to. "It all flows back to the policy. We have a policy and we all need to abide by the policy."

School Committeeman Jimmy Vittorio-so said he was outraged when he learned about the School Committee meals.

"It's a disgrace. It's a waste of taxpayers' money. I would never go out to dinner using the people's money. That's a serious conflict of interest. For committee members to go to Mill Street and send the taxpayers a bill is outrageous. I actually agree with Mayor Sullivan, they should pay the money back."

School Committee member Amy McGovern said that she had only gone to Mill Street "once" with fellow board members

and left early when she realized there was a quorum because she felt uncomfortable with the whole situation. "I know they do this all the time but I was very uncomfortable with it," McGovern said. "All I had was a diet coke and I left a few dollars on the table to pay for my drink. I just don't think it's right. It's abominable."

Heidi Pearlman, spokesman for the Department of Education said the matter of School Committee members getting free meals is an issue for the Ethics Commission not the Department of Education. "Was it appropriate for them to have meetings at an expensive restaurant," she asked rhetorically, "probably not. But this is a local issue for local officials to deal with. This is not an issue for the Department of Education."

It was a stark contrast to the position taken by the Department of Education when misspending allegations against former superintendents Jim Scully and Mae Gaskins surfaced in previous administrations.

In 1987 the Department of Education threatened the School Committee to fire Jim Scully or they would take over the Lawrence School System. The Department of Education was also intimately involved in the Gaskins firing.

Ironically, former Superintendent Mae Gaskins was fired, in part because she billed the taxpayers for 32 bags of Cape Cod potato chips (totaling \$77.13), a meal at Palmers Restaurant in Andover (\$75.57) and a meal order from Lawton's Hot Dog Stand which included two hot dogs, a large order of fried clams, a large order of onion rings and ice tea for a total of \$16.35

At the time of Gaskins' firing, then School Committeeman Suzanne Piscitello (who is listed on several meal receipts at Mill Street) led the charge against Gaskins for what she called "a disgraceful waste of our children's money," which she said was "robbing our children of the educational dollars they need for their future."

Piscitello told the Eagle Tribune in January of 2000 that the precedent set by the firing of Jim Scully for what she called "questionable expenses" had to be maintained by Gaskins and future superintendents. "You can't have one standard for one Superintendent and another standard for another superintendent."

Sweeney said Piscitello's involvement with the One Mill Street meals was "the height of hypocrisy."

"It's obvious that public office isn't the place for either one of them (Piscitello and Arce). As alleged professionals they should know better. If the Gaskins case was still in court we would be in a boatload of trouble on this. I mean, not only is Piscitello a former assistant superintendent and vice president of the School Committee, but her added role in the Gaskins firing pours a can of gasoline on the fire."

Sweeney said the revelations about free meals at One Mill Street explains an ongoing question regarding his former colleagues, "...at least now we know why School Committee Meetings used to last only half an hour. They all wanted to get to Mill Street before last call."

Suzanne Piscitello did not return calls from The Valley Patriot to be interviewed for this story.

Tom Duggan is publisher of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass Citizens Alliance, a Police Survivor and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program from 10-noon on WCAP every Saturday. You can email him valleypatriot@aol.com.

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March 2004

16 Pages

Valley Patriot Exclusive!

School Committee Bills Taxpayers for Fine Dining

Tom Duggan

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*Michael Sweeney
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Continued on Page 8



Lt. Governor Kerry Healey with Maria Marasco

Andover's Marasco Campaigns for Reform

Valley Patriot Staff

Boston- State Rep. Candidate Maria Marasco (R-Andover) received a campaign boost from Lt. Governor Kerry Healey in Boston last week at her first fund raising event in preparation for her formal campaign announcement for 18th Essex State Representative. The district spans six communities, including her hometown of Andover, North Andover, Boxford, Haverhill, Methuen and Georgetown. The seat is currently held by first term incumbent Barbara L'Italien (D-Andover).

"Maria is exactly the right kind of person who will best represent her district," said Healey. "Maria has the right kind of skills to help us reshape government in an effective way," she said. Marasco supports the governor's efforts to cut waste and mismanagement in state government.

"I will stand by the Governor and Lt. Governor to make responsible reforms. As

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Syndicated Columnists



Neil Cavuto

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Thomas Sowell

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Rabbi
Goldstein on
"The Passion"



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Line of Duty Deaths
by Craig Floyd

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Profile of
Andover School Candidates

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Dr. Charles Ormsby -
Thinking Outside the Box

Page 3

Paying Attention!

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N. Andover Selectman Race,
Smith v. Smedile

Page 5

Senior News/Senior Centers

Pages 10 & 11

Smith v. Smedile for N. A. Selectman

Valley Patriot Staff



face to the voters in her bid for reelection.

Joe Edward Smith, an engineer by trade and a union Democrat, says his campaign is about open government and representing issues important to the town voters. "There is a big difference between Ms. Smedile and myself," he said. "Before the voters decide who will represent them on March 30th it is important that they know what those difference are."

"I opposed the trash transfer station and Ms. Smedile supported it." Smith also said Smedile supported leasing half the airport land adding, "the people of North Andover clearly wanted it sold off. It is important to represent the people of the town and act on their behalf." Smith says he opposes \$95,000 in raises for nonunion employees "especially at a time when we are talking about laying off fire

Continued on Page 13

Sullivan: "Absent All Auto Fraud, Insurance Rates Won't Go Down!"

Tom Duggan



"...if you call the Board of Insurance today and ask them... 'if the auto fraud goes away completely (in Lawrence), at what point will the rates go down?' They will tell you what they told me last week, they won't."

*...Lawrence Mayor,
Michael J. Sullivan*

Lawrence - Mayor Michael Sullivan says that even if police investigations are capable of eliminating all auto insurance fraud in the City of Lawrence, "auto insurance rates still won't go down."

Sullivan, touting the hard work of Police Chief John Romero and the Lawrence Police Department, said that the investigations into auto insurance fraud in Lawrence were producing startling results but added, "If you call the Board of Insurance today and ask, just for example, 'if the auto fraud goes away completely (in Lawrence) at what point will the rates go down?' What they will tell you is what they told me last week, they won't."

For years, State Legislators, previous mayors and police chiefs have been telling Lawrence residents that the high auto insurance rates in the city (the third highest in the state) are the result of insurance fraud. Sullivan says that simply isn't the case.

"What we are finding out is that, what will cause rates to go down (in Lawrence) is for the rest of the cities and towns in the state to tackle fraud in their communities as well. It would have to be a statewide effort. I think the insurance companies, years ago should have been doing the investigative work that the Lawrence police are doing this year."

Continued on page 7

...on TEN Years of AMAZING News Coverage



**-Mike Gagliardi,
Local 175 Laborers' Union of North America**



Three Reasons Why You May Not Have Felt Better on a Gluten-Free Diet

What if your path to a better quality life is avoiding food that is killing you and your family?

Dr. Jin Sung
CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

With all the buzz on how Gluten can cause so many chronic symptoms, many patients I consult with have tried a Gluten Free diet at one time or the other. The

responses I hear is that they felt better for a little while or even that they may have felt worse. Gluten sensitivity is not a fad, it is real - there are over 10,000 research publications on Gluten and its affects causing multiple health issues from digestive disorders to chronic pain and fatigue

to metabolic disorders like thyroid disease and diabetes.

Because going on a gluten free diet takes a great deal of education and commitment, it is recommended that proper testing be performed to identify whether the diet is right for you. Remember going gluten free is not a trendy diet; it is a permanent lifestyle that should be taken very seriously as even small amounts of gluten exposure can cause problems. To accurately diagnose gluten sensitivity, the right lab test must be used. Genetic testing is the gold standard for diagnosing gluten sensitivity. Unfortunately, many doctors still use antiquated and inaccurate tests. If you have chronic health issues Gluten may be a trigger, but you have to consider other components that are adding fuel on the fire as well.

Here are my top 3 Reasons Why You May Not Have Felt Better on a Gluten-Free Diet

1. Gut repair - Unresolved Intestinal Permeability issues also known as 'Leaky Gut' can continue to cause symptoms even on a gluten free diet. Realize if you are sensitive to gluten and been eating it for years, damage has been done to your intestinal lining that needs repair and continued support. There are tests now available to measure the damage to your intestinal lining.

2. Cross reactive foods "I'm Gluten Free but I eat Corn-chip Now Syndrome" -Some foods act chemically similar to gluten and may cause a negative reaction

or symptoms for you as well. These foods should be tested for sensitivity along with gluten: Coffee, Chocolate, Buckwheat, Rye, Barley, Sorghum, Millet, Tapioca, Amaranth, Spelt, Sesame, Corn, Rice, Milk, Potato, Hemp, Oats, Yeast.

3. Hidden exposure- Gluten while found in our diet in foods like bread, pasta, cake, cereals, and crackers; can be found in other places as well like: Soy Sauce, Food Starches, Food Emulsifiers, Food Stabilizers, Artificial Food Colorings, Malt Extract, Flavor, Syrup.

People who experience chronic pain and fatigue, headaches, insomnia, and even weight gain should consider Gluten sensitivity as a possible trigger. Also consider the possibility that other foods mentioned above may also create a negative reaction for those already on a gluten free diet.

What I am finding in my patients who are Gluten sensitive is that there are other mechanisms that are preventing their gut inflammation from decreasing not allowing them to feel and function at optimal health. Once those are addressed, they feel

better and get their life back.

Dr. Jin Sung is a chiropractic physician who helps his patients both neurologically and metabolically to manage complex health issues. He can be

reached at 978-688-6999 or visit his web-site at www.DrJinSung.com



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HAPPY TENTH ANNIVERSARY!

~Emily Wiseheart
Boys & Girls Club of Gr. Lowell

Colon Cancer Awareness Month

Francis P MacMillan, Jr, MD, FACG
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Forget for a minute, the ongoing debate over national health care, and the endless shouting that never seems to persuade anyone to think differently than they already do. There are much more important topics that could affect your health and your enjoyment of living than the things the politicians will work out one way or another. What most folks are looking for is not to get sick in the first place.

Would you be shocked if I told you that we can largely prevent the number one and number two causes of cancer death in the United States? Would you believe me that the answer is already old news? Well it is true.

If you are an American, the most common cause of cancer death is lung cancer, the vast majority of which is preventable by not smoking! As for number two, colorectal cancer or CRC, kills more Americans than breast cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer, pancreas cancer or liver cancer by far. CRC is largely preventable, but the reality is unfortunately that many people do not take the opportunity to be screened, nor are they even aware they are at risk.

News flash: we are all at risk! According to the American Cancer Society, there is an approximate 1 out of 19 risk that someone will get CRC in their lifetime. This is called the life-time risk. Another way of saying this is that there is an excellent chance, that if not you, you will know or love someone who is afflicted by this terrible, often deadly, and mostly preventable disease. In the United States, the yearly incidence of new people affected by CRC is 150,000. Every year 50,000 of these folks will die of their disease.

Fortunately, the rates of incidences and deaths have shown a decline over the past 20 years. Amazing progress has been made, but it is surely always easier to prevent than treat a cancer.



For many years now, March has been National Colo-rectal Cancer Awareness Month. You may see a blue ribbon or lapel pin on your doctor during the month of March to remind us all that this is a very important and often overlooked discussion. What this means to me, is an opportunity to shine a bright light on a topic that is often not a part of our family dinner conversations, my family excepted!

Because pre-cancerous polyps are thought to occur as a necessary first step in developing CRC, testing for polyps before they turn into a cancer is the best strategy. Age over 50 is a good place to start, because polyps are common at that age, but cancers are still rare. If you have a family history of colon cancer, you should start earlier and start by talking to your doctor. Pre-cancerous polyps can be detected by both testing the stool for hidden blood, or by looking directly for polyps by colonoscopy. The best test is the test that actually gets done!

My sincere advice is for you to talk with your doctor to find out how best to chose among the available screening tests. No screening tests are 100% reliable, however there is a dramatic reduction in the numbers of cancers that occur in people who actually participate in screening compared with those who do not.

Don't be the one who fails to take advantage of this opportunity to prevent a serious and often deadly disease. The American College of Gastroenterology has a website for patients for those who want to learn more about colorectal cancer screening, and other digestive diseases <http://patients.gi.org>

Dr. MacMillan is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology and serves as it's Massachusetts Governor. He is also the Vice President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr. MacMillan is a native of North Andover, where he also serves on the town's Board of Health.

Fitness Together of North Andover Provides Tips for Staying Motivated

As we have started The New Year's resolutions and begin the best intentions start to flicker out and our determination begins to wear off, many people begin a never-ending battle to beat the resolution "slump." In fact, research shows a least a third of New Year's resolutions are abandoned before the end of January, and less than 25% of them are kept long-term.

In order to help consumers beat this all-too-common issue, Fitness Together, a global franchise providing one-on-one and small group training, is offering tips on how to "reboot" and "recharge" fitness goals. Fitness Together works to help customers at any fitness level succeed in establishing and maintaining a healthy and fit lifestyle.

"People need to keep in mind that most resolutions, especially those that include including one's physical health, are meant to be long term and not 'quick fixes', said Maureen Sullivan - Owner of Fitness Together of North Andover. "Keeping yourself motivated takes hard work. And just as you would recharge a battery on a mobile phone, a New Year's resolution may need charging as well."

Fitness Together - North Andover offers

the following tips to help people stay motivated and engaged in their workout after the New Year:

1. Mark your calendar. Specify a date and time of your workout in your calendar as you would any other appointment. This makes it harder to skip or forget!
2. Think ahead. Start preparing for your workout the night before by packing a gym bag and putting by the front door so you're reminded of where you'll be headed after work.
3. Take baby steps. Most goals, especially fitness goals, are more successfully achieved when they are broken down into a series of smaller goals or actions. Planning your strategy to take advantage of a series of smaller achievements will give you a great sense of accomplishment and the motivation to continue.
4. Pick a buddy. To prevent boredom and maintain your motivation, find a friend (or four!) to adopt a similar exercise schedule. Studies show that training with others is more beneficial than training alone.
5. Recruit professional help. Personal trainers are a valuable fitness resource

Defamation in the Workplace

Attorney Timothy F. Stark, Esq.
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Defamation often occurs from statements made by an employer about an employee. Written defamation is libel and oral defamation is slander. In order to be considered legally defamatory a statement or writing must be published to someone other than to the individual employee. For example, if the boss says or writes something that an employee believes is defamatory, unless a third person hears or reads the comments or writings, there is no defamation under the law. This requirement is called "publication."

In Massachusetts, an employee may recover if he or she can show negligent or intentional publication of a defamatory statement. The term "intentional," as it is used here, is really self-explanatory since it simply means that the employer meant to publish the statement. In other words, the employer didn't accidentally make the statement and he made it with the intent that other people would hear it and believe that the remarks were true. The term "negligent" is a little more subtle, but as a general rule it means that even if the employer didn't want other people to hear or read the comments he should have known that when he "published" the statement someone would hear or read the statement.

The statement itself, in order to be defamatory, must subject the employee to contempt, ridicule, or hatred, or discredit the employee in the minds of their co-workers or respectable members of the community. Also, the statement as it pertains to the employee must be false. Therefore, if an employee did in fact steal something from the employer and is called a thief by the employer, there is, of course, no defamation.

However, employers have a "limited



privilege" to say things about an employee that they have a reason to believe are true. This issue often surfaces at unemployment hearings when an employer describes an employee's conduct using words that offend the employee. It also surfaces when an employer is conducting an employee evaluation and describes the employee's performance in a critical manner. Not only are employer comments made in judicial or quasi-judicial hearings subject to this "limited privilege," but employer opinions of an employee's performance, even if incorrect, are still covered by the privilege.

The above summary is a very general overview of what can be some very complicated issues concerning defamation in the workplace. If you are an employee or an employer facing defamation issues, call an experienced attorney who focuses on employment law. It is important to know your legal rights so that you can make informed decisions. Remember, the only person who has legal rights is the person who knows what those legal rights are.

Attorney Timothy F. Stark, Esq. has over 25 years of legal experience in Employment Law, Divorce Law, and Divorce Mediation, with backgrounds in both Human Resource Management and Psychology. Please feel free to contact him by calling (978) 685-8777 or e-mailing him at info@timfstark.com. His law office is located at 805 Turnpike Street, Suite 101, North Andover, MA 01845.



Fitness Together, 73 Main Street, North Andover

for exercise ideas, technique assistance and support. Working out with a personal trainer means burning more calories and improving all health-related aspects of fitness, including cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition and flexibility.

"One thing to remember when working towards achieving a fitness goal or sticking with your New Year's resolution is that when you hit a bump in the road, keep going," added Sullivan. "Utilizing the above tips can help you stay on track and ultimately achieve the results you were working towards."

Fitness Together of North Andover is located 73 Main Street. For more information, please call 978-659-0047 or visit www.FitnessTogether.com/NorthAndover.

About Fitness Together: Fitness Together is part of Highlands Ranch, Colorado-based WellBiz Brands, Inc., one of the largest

wellness franchise organizations in the United States. The company owns Fitness Together Franchise

Corporation (Fitness Together), which franchises one-on-one and small group personal physical fitness training studios, and Elements Therapeutic Massage, Inc., (Elements), which franchises Elements Massage studios, providing custom therapeutic massage to meet clients' individual needs.

Fitness Together began franchising in 1996 and currently has 200 locations across the United States, Brazil, and Canada. Elements began franchising in 2006 and has more than 170 locations in 32 states. If you would like more information about Fitness Together franchise opportunities, please visit <http://fitnessstog.com/franchise>. If you would like more information about Elements franchise opportunities, please visit <http://elementsfranchise.com>.

“Healthy Memory” Nutrition Tips

Gregory Batchelder
METHUEN VILLAGE

When asked, Americans rate Alzheimer’s disease as their second most-feared illness, following cancer, which is why Methuen Village is a staunch advocate for taking practical steps toward a healthier brain at any age.

We now know that changes and damage in the brain occur decades before any memory loss symptoms appear, so it’s a good idea for everyone to protect and enhance their cognitive health by following a simple brain healthy diet. Methuen Village practices what it preaches offering “brain healthy cuisine” as part of its dining service for all residents. The community’s “Brain Healthy Cooking Program” was developed by Boston-based Senior Living Residences, the professional management company that oversees daily operations of the community. Senior Living Residences offers a holistic approach, aiming to improve residents’ quality of life on all levels.

Anyone can follow the basic guidelines of the Brain Healthy Cooking Program to promote brain health and lower their risk of Alzheimer’s disease. Several recent large-scale studies found that individuals who follow a “Mediterranean-type diet” (which the Brain Healthy Cooking Program is based on), had a 32-40% decreased risk for developing Alzheimer’s disease.

Eat brightly colored fruits. Blueberries and raspberries counteract inflammation in the body, which has been associated with cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer’s disease.

Control blood sugar by reducing high fructose corn syrup and refined sugar. Use stevia, a natural sugar substitute, as well as molasses and brown sugar instead. The hippocampus of the brain, an important region for memory, is sensitive to changes in blood sugar levels.

Spice it up! Spices have amazing protective properties – cinnamon, rosemary, oregano, and turmeric reduce inflammation and increase blood flow, important to brain health.

Eat whole grains, a good source of fiber, magnesium, and iron. Substituting white flour, bread, rice, and pasta for whole wheat varieties will help to

maintain weight and reduce your risk for heart disease.

Cardiovascular health directly contributes to brain health.

Eat plenty of leafy green vegetables for their high levels of vitamins E, D, and dietary fiber. Eaten on a regular basis, vegetables have a dramatic effect on overall health.

Go Nuts! A handful of nuts a day provide your daily dose of Vitamin E - which is a powerful protector of the brain.

Increase Omega-3 fatty acid intake. Omega-3s are naturally found in your brain. As you age levels of these fats in your body drop, and eating fish, green vegetables, walnuts, and flax seed help to replace the losses and improve transmission of nerve impulses.

Gregory Batchelder is the Executive Director of Methuen Village, an Assisted Living and Memory Support Community located in Methuen, MA



SHEILA MULLINS’ RECIPE CORNER

White Bean & Collard Greens Soup and Butternut Squash, Lentil, & Spinach Soup

I decided to take on a few culinary things during this polar vortex. What is more hearty, warming, & yummy than soup? Yes, you’ll read this in March, but New England is still mighty cold this time of year. So, break out your big soup pots & let’s make some good food & let’s s-t-r-e-t-c-h the budget. These both freeze well, keep well in the fridge, & neither takes a long time. I’d say no more than 45-60 minutes from the time one starts & both are fairly easy to put together. Let’s begin!

First up is a white bean & collard greens soup. I’ve never made anything with collard greens before & you better believe it, I’ll make more! Delicious, filling, hearty, colourful, & robust. Boy, if that’s not a good description for a great soup, I don’t know what is!

White bean & collard greens soup
1/2-2/3 c chardonnay
3 small bay leaves or 2 large bay leaves
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 t dried thyme
1/4 c olive oil
1/2 t cayenne pepper
2 c carrots, diced into 3/4” pieces
3 c parsnips, diced into 3/4” pieces
3 c onions, diced into 3/4” pieces
1 bunch of collard greens, stemmed & leaves cut into 1” wide strips
28 oz can cannellini beans, drained & rinsed
4” piece of parmesano reggiano rind
8 c chicken OR vegetable stock
1 T kosher salt
2 t pepper

In a Dutch oven, heat oil & sauté onions, carrots, & parsnips until onions are translucent & just starting to brown. Add all other ingredients except collard greens. Simmer over medium for 15 minutes. Add collard greens & simmer another 15 minutes. Feeds a hungry army’s worth of people!

OK, so it really feeds 10-12.
If one wishes to make this dish vegan,

eliminate the cheese rind & use vegetable stock.

My second soup here came out of needing to make Jerry something for lunches for work & looking in the fridge, pantry, & freezer. Let’s just say he is one happy camper. You can substitute kale, collard greens or some other greens; you’ll just have to adjust the cooking time for those greens.

Butternut squash, lentil, & spinach soup

1-20 bag frozen butternut squash chunks
2 c dried lentils
8 c chicken OR vegetable stock
2 onions, diced into 3/4” pieces
3 T fines herbes
1 T kosher salt
1/2 t cayenne pepper

2 t pepper
4-5 c baby spinach
3 T oil
grated fontina cheese, optional
In a Dutch oven, heat oil & sauté onions until translucent. Do not brown the onions. Add lentils & stock then bring to a boil. Turn down heat to medium & let lentils simmer until they

are al dente, about 25-30 minutes. Add the frozen squash, fines herbes, salt, pepper & cayenne pepper. Let simmer until the squash is cooked. Add the spinach & cook for 1-2 minutes more, or until just barely wilted. Serve. Grated fontina cheese is a great topping for this soup.



Recipes are created by Sheila Mullins & taste tested by Jerry & Sheila Mullins. Sheila lives in Newburyport & is a personal cook. She can be reached at Sheila_A_Mullins@hotmail.com & she looks forward to hearing from you.



Kick A\$\$ K9: From Page 26

Thanks to The Valley Patriot which published a story in April of 2012 entitled “Will Rogue State Agency Close Animal Shelters? Mass. Dept. of Agriculture has Conflicts of Interest: DOA Employees In Bed with Dog Breeders” all of us in the dog rescue industry know that the dog breeders have infiltrated state government and are harassing rescues to try and put them out of business.

And, thanks to The Valley Patriot, we have been able to network with legislators to try and put a stop to this kind of practice.

What they are doing is trying to limit the choice families have when buying an animal. Their goal is to drive customers to the dog breeder industry, an industry which reaps all the profits from the rescues they put out of business.

Some, like Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan and State Representative Jim Lyons, have called it a conflict of interest in a corrupted state agency.

I call it like I see it, HEARTLESS!

In my opinion all living beings have souls, and deserve a chance to live.

If an individual would like to purchase a dog from a breeder that’s fine, even dogs from a breeder are dogs that have souls.

But, if someone wants to adopt a shelter animal, their freedom of choice should not be limited so that dog breeders can jack up their prices and make more money by cornering the market.

Especially when they are abusing the resources of state government to do it.

Rescue dogs have a soul too. Their lives have value and they deserve to have someone to hold them and love them. They are not “damaged and broken” like the breeders in state government claim. They should not be “put down” because humans abused or neglected them. Those of us who love dogs know now who is really on the side of the puppies and who is on the side of making more money at the expense of puppies lives.

On behalf of all the girls at Kick A\$\$ K9 Dog Rescue, I want the readers of The Valley Patriot to know that we are forever grateful for such allies like Tom and the crew at The Valley Patriot, as well as State Representatives Brad Hill and Jim Lyons.

If it weren’t for their hard work to protect shelters in Massachusetts, who knows where all these desperate abandoned souls would be today.

I also want to thank State Senator Bruce Tarr (R) Newbury for his dogged determination to protect animals from abuse as a result of the “puppy doe” case.

We read that story in The Valley Patriot too along with so many others.

On this celebration of The Valley Patriot’s tenth anniversary, I want to thank everyone who is part of Tom’s secret “network” and everyone who helps us fight for the puppies behind the scenes at the state house, as well as The Valley Patriot readers who reach out and adopt shelter animals every day without fanfare.

I hope to see you all at the BASH, all the Girls from Kick A\$\$ K9 will be there!

THANK YOU A&B FLOORING FOR YOUR LOYALTY AND SUPPORT!
~ Tom Duggan



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Bob Joncas

The Six Elements of the Massachusetts Way of Justice

Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan
VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Every year on Women’s Day (March 8th) we remember the women who inspired us with their innate decency and courage. This year I give thanks that Violet Amirault enriched our Commonwealth with her life, a good person and self-made entrepreneur who really should’ve moved to California, a battered wife who refused to be dependent on the tax-dollar dole and displayed great strength of character despite consciously-false vicious attacks by a despicable jealous tax-dollar-addicted politician - Emily’s List’s very own Martha Coakley - who lets real criminals walk. Good women live like Violet Amirault.

Over the past 12 months another case has been unfolding in Massachusetts that is so identical to previous such cases it serves as a textbook example of the Massachusetts Way. Here are the classic Six Elements -

1. A powerful Harvard Hospital.
2. A corrupt Judge with conscious disregard for the US Constitution.
3. The captured Commonwealth acting as a State Predator.
4. A sick child and it’s tortured Parents.
5. A spineless cowardly lawyer unwilling to stand up to evil.
6. An unpublished corrupt unconstitutional illegal ‘gag order’.

The only thing different about individual cases is the name of the child and it’s parents. These 6 elements however, reign supreme and are seen in every single case.

Currently in Boston Juvenile Court, young Justina Pelletier and her family are being tortured by the despicable Judge Joseph Johnston on behalf of Harvard’s evil psychiatrists who are hell-bent on coercing the parents to declare in court that Harvard is correct, Tufts is wrong and that they would never take their child to Tufts again. If the parents do not agree, the despicable Judge Johnston has threatened they will not get their daughter back at all. The Commonwealth here is a classic State Predator, engaging in open unconstitutional abuse of governmental power on behalf of Harvard’s psychiatrists via both the despicable Judge Johnston, and the institutionally corrupt EOHHS-DCF.

This is no different from getting a King’s general warrant issued before the United States was born and general warrants were deliberately outlawed. Harvard, being older than the United States, clearly still relishes those royal times. This country came into being because those royal times were an absolute nightmare. An absolute nightmare is exactly what everyone says when they hear about the Pelletier case.

Strictly in order to hide Harvard’s and his own evil actions from the public, the despicable Judge Johnston issued a verbal warning to the parents forbidding them from talking to the press. A ‘gag order’ is an unconstitutional prior restraint on the Freedom of Speech, and so is impermissible unless the government meets a very high burden to justify its imposition. Part of the government’s high burden is the duty to publish why it has imposed this unconstitutional prior restraint so the public may examine the reason.

Naturally, the despicable Judge Joseph Johnston cannot publicly say, ‘oh it’s to protect Harvard’s psychiatrists from public outrage at their evil violation of basic human rights’, and so he has not published the ‘gag order’ or his reasons for imposing

it. One thing is guaranteed - the despicable Judge Johnston’s ‘gag order’ is in no way to protect or help young Justina.

The institutionally corrupt EOHHS-DCF physically prevented the mother from taking even cellphone photos of her own daughter. Again, this is in no way to protect or help Justina. This is solely to hide from public outrage the fact that the young child has gone terribly downhill while imprisoned by Harvard psychiatrists in their locked ward for 11 long months. A bright, happy, fit figure skater on ice is now reduced to a sickly, wheelchair-bound child who cannot even stand on her own. All EOHHS-DCF cares about is to prevent that photo from hitting public view. That is why EOHHS-DCF also banned Justina from attending mass on Christmas Eve.

On behalf of The Valley Patriot, I myself filed the first motion against this corrupt unconstitutional ‘gag order’. The family’s lawyer had not filed against the ‘gag order’, obeying element 5. The ACLU of Massachusetts also chose to sit on its spineless butt. After all, they could lose invitations to wine and cheese socials at Harvard.

The Pelletiers, made of much sterner stuff than Harvard and it’s despicable Judge Johnston envisaged, given the success with which the Massachusetts way has dealt with previous children, broke element 5 above and imported a courageous lawyer, naturally from outside Massachusetts. Matt Staver has won arguments himself in the nation’s Supreme Court.

The despicable Judge Johnston threw Staver out of the courtroom. Not only did he not allow the Pelletiers to bring him on as their attorney, he gave Harvard and DCF 48 hours to “contest” the Pelletiers’ choice of attorney! Of course, Harvard is the Master! Staver’s very presence clearly scared the Judge. After all, ALL 6 elements must be present for the Massachusetts way. We cannot allow the parents to now get effective counsel!

The despicable Judge Johnston then ruled that he would decide on young Justina’s placement on the 17th of March, before ruling on the motions against his unconstitutional unpublished ‘gag order’ on the 24th. Meaning he would complete the railroading of the Pelletiers on behalf of Harvard’s evil psychiatrists before allowing sunshine into the court, by which time of course it would be way, way too late. This made the tortured mother faint.

EOHHS-DCF, perfectly happy that the despicable Judge Johnston issued a corrupt gag order, actually filed a motion to hold the Pelletiers in contempt of court for telling the press and others that their daughter is worsening! Even if you gave EOHHS-DCF, Roche and Polanowicz any benefit of the doubt after the Jeremiah Oliver betrayal, you absolutely cannot after this! These are evil people.

In Pennsylvania, they recently convicted two despicable Juvenile Court judges for throwing young children into private prisons in exchange for a hefty bribe. But then, throwing a despicable Judge into prison for blatant unconstitutional abuse of governmental power is not the Massachusetts way. Protecting state predators is. Remember, there are only 6 elements in the Massachusetts way.

Loving the US Constitution is not one of them.

You can email your comments to scleroplex@gmail.com

ZYSK: FROM PAGE 26

bill became a reality, which it did.
Jim Lyons: What can I say about him except HUGE animal lover and strong supporter of rescue and animal adoptions. Not to mention, he is 100% behind animal abuse charges needing to be upheld in our courts as felonies. Most recently, a Lawrence man was charged with animal abuse to a cat. With the backing of our Local and State politicians listening, the courts are hearing. It is pitiful people act in such a cruel manner, but I am grateful the judicial system is now punishing appropriately.

Other articles The Valley Patriot has allowed me to focus on include state regulating of grooming salons and doggy daycares. After a dog was killed in Canton because the dog was left unsupervised at a doggy daycare, and a dog was choked to death in western MA because he fell off the grooming table, I wrote my articles. It starts with awareness. It takes time, but then the process can begin.

State Rep is Diana DiZoligo, another animal lover and another politician I am educating more and more about the pet care industry. She understands my business and has been a huge supporter of my career choice.

I recently won an award and she was one of the first to congratulate me. In my industry, this was a huge milestone. It shows that our political leaders are understanding that the pet care industry is a “real” industry and is economically beneficial to our communities.

Animals do have rights; animals do not deserve to be abused. I am beyond grate-

ful for that breakfast meeting four years ago at Joe’s with Tom. I have been blessed with the connections I have made through The Valley Patriot. The opportunities for me as an Animal Advocate to educate are endless with the love and support of Tom Duggan, The Valley Patriot, our local and state politicians, and of course all of The Valley Patriot readers. I love this movement that the general population is now considering our family pets more than pets and are considering them as our family members.

Tommy - Big sloppy wet kisses and I wish The Valley Patriot another “pawsitive” 10 years!!

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been fea-



tured on local radio, tv and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is also the recipient of the 2013 Valley Patriot Good Will Amba-

sador Award for her dedication to promoting the Valley Patriot. She is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units. Tracey may be reached at wigglegwalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care.

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TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING



10 Years! The Best TV Had To Offer In The Last Decade

Bill Cushing

VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST



The Valley Patriot turns 10 years old this month, and I thought I would go over what I think are the best TV shows that have aired over the last 10 years. It's quite a list, and remember, these are

just my opinions. The only requirement to make this list is that the majority of the shows episodes needed to air within the last 10 years. So here are my choices, not in any particular order:

The Shield - Series creator Shawn Ryan shattered the mold for your conventional police drama with this show. Airing from 2002-2008, 'The Shield' was unlike any cop show before it and has been unlike any show since. Michael Chiklis played Vic Mackey, a sympathetic but corrupt Los Angeles cop who made up his own rules. The show put FX on the map and changed the way cable dramas were perceived. 'The Shield' presented stories that were dark, hard to watch, but at the same time absolutely riveting.

Rescue Me - Denis Leary's series about NYC Firefighters dealing with a post 9/11 world. It was an immediate hit with fans and critics alike. The show mixed humor with very dark storylines such as depression, alcoholism, homophobia, and the aftermath of 9/11. A terrific supporting cast rounded out the show nicely.

How I Met Your Mother - CBS' hit sitcom premiered in September 2005. It centers on Ted Mosby, as he recounts to his son and daughter the events that led him to meeting their mother. The series has garnered a cult following over the years for its continuing storylines and entertaining characters, including womanizer Barney Stinson played by Neil Patrick Harris.

LOST - This series exploded onto the scene on September 22, 2004 and quickly became appointment viewing. The series followed the lives of a group of plane crash survivors on a mysterious tropical island. 'Lost' unique and fascinating brand of storytelling, which used flashbacks and flash-forwards routinely to fill in the stories of these amazing characters, was perfectly complimented by an incredible cast.

24 - This show, about a counter terrorist unit of the US government, premiered less than 2 months after the 9/11 attacks, and it defined the state of our nation's national security for the decade. Pulse pounding storylines and the perfectly cast Keifer Sutherland as CTU Agent Jack Bauer along with its real time concept propelled this show to the top of the TV's Best lists in the year it premiered.

Mad Men - AMC's signature series centered around the goings on at a 1960's Madison Avenue advertising agency. Jon Hamm's performance as the flawed but fascinating Don Draper is the

centerpiece of this series.

Survivor - CBS's reality competition series stranded a group of Americans on a deserted island and forced them to live together and compete in challenges. The last person left standing would take home \$1 million dollars. Now in its 28th edition, it changed the landscape of TV, and has become the gold standard in reality TV.

Homeland - This Showtime series stars Claire Danes as Carrie Mathison, A CIA Officer with bipolar disorder, who is convinced that an American POW returning from 8 years in captivity has been turned by the enemy and now is a terrorist. Stellar performances by Danes, Damian Lewis as the returning POW Nicholas Brody, and Mandy Patinkin as Carrie's mentor and Division Chief Saul propelled this series to the top of critic's best lists.

The Walking Dead - Based on the series of graphic novels from Robert Kirkman, this series about a post apocalyptic world dominated by flesh-eating zombies defied the odds. Many thought the subject matter and gore that this show displayed would never last with audiences. Were they ever wrong. The Walking Dead has become the most watched weekly cable series in television history. Don't be fooled, though. This show is much more than blood and guts. Excellent writing and a top notch cast is what keeps the viewers tuning in week after week.

Curb Your Enthusiasm - HBO's wildly funny comedy from Seinfeld creator Larry David. David also stars as himself in this largely improvised series. The laughs provided by this series are often at the expense of uncomfortable situations. You don't know whether to laugh or cringe, but it's always hilarious.

The Sopranos - David Chase's landmark series brilliantly melded the dark, violent world of an organized crime boss with life in middle class suburbia. One of the best casts ever to grace a TV screen.

Breaking Bad - Creator Vince Gilligan's series premiered in January 2008 to good reviews and soon the word of mouth grew. Bryan Cranston starred as Walter White, a high school chemistry teacher diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Soon Walter turns to cooking and selling crystal meth in order to be able to leave his family with money after he has died. The transformation of Walter White over 5 seasons from family man and respected teacher to drug kingpin and wanted criminal made for some of the most incredible television ever produced.

Happy 10th Anniversary to The Valley Patriot!

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

For daily TV news, follow Bill on Twitter @TVNewsandNotes and on Facebook at TVNewsandNotes

www.tvnewsandnotes.com

MIND OVER MATTER with JERRY VALLEY

How Hypnotherapy Can Improve Your Lifestyle

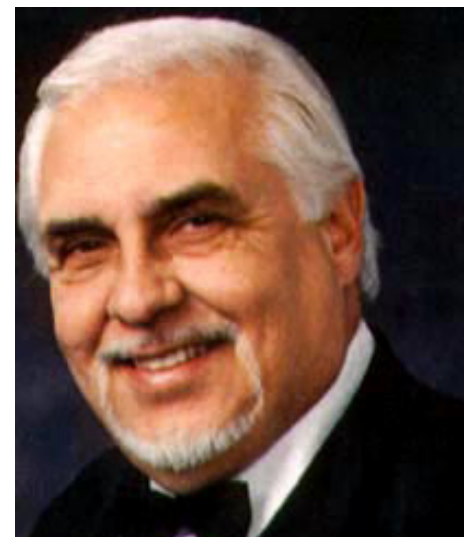
JERRY VALLEY

VALLEY PATRIOT HYPNOSIS COLUMNIST

This month the Valley Patriot welcomes world famous hypnotist Jerry Valley as an exclusive monthly columnist on hypnosis.

When a person watches a good, ethical and clean hypnosis show, it might, in many cases, interest that person to seek out a clinical NGH certified consulting hypnotist for some self-improvement in his/her life.

Stage hypnotists do shows for remuneration but also to enlighten the public that this is not the only aspect of hypnosis. The ethical stage hypnotists usually do their best to actually promote the clinical side by mentioning the various categories that can be improved in many cases. We work with many categories such as painless childbirth, smoking cessation, relaxation and stress reduction, ADD/ADHD for children and adults, improved athletics for novices and professionals, how to improve study habits and how to pass exams, phobia removals, alcoholism and substance abuse. Hypnosis is NOT a cure all, but it does work for those persons who are open to it and who accept and follows our suggestions.



Let me explain exactly how hypnotic suggestions work. Some years ago, I was featured on the TV show "20/20." In that show, John Stossell made this statement: "The hypnotist gives the client the suggestions but THE CLIENT MUST HAVE THE DESIRE FOR THE SUGGESTION TO WORK."

With that being said, I must say that hypnosis today is being widely accepted by the general public and the medical community also. I have had a number of

JERRY VALLEY: PAGE 44

THE EMPTY CHAIR SHOW

The N.I.M.B.Y' S

Phil Lahey

VALLEY PATRIOT ADDICTION COLUMNIST

For those of you who don't know what that stands for, it means "Not in My Backyard". Lately there has been much media attention on heroin and addiction in general. I think people are starting to realize we are facing an epidemic that touches every city and town in America. With the large number of people being affected, there is now a great shortage of recovery beds.

It is time for each community to step up and provide recovery housing in their area. I think most people would agree there is a need, as long as it's not in their back yard. I don't blame them for their concerns. The argument has been made that if you have a recovery house in your area, it will attract addicts and dealers. The fact of the matter is that most recovery homes are located in areas that already have a high rate of drug use. Although, located in areas of this type, they still tend to be very successful. It seems dealers and addicts tend to avoid these places.

Many of you might say why should we believe you, the father of a recovering heroin addict? That's a fair question! Please do some research and you just might find that addicts in recovery are some of the nicest people you could ever meet. They have such gratitude and compassion that many of us could only hope to achieve.

My daughter and I do a series of shows about addiction and recovery, where many of our guests are addicts in recovery. I ask you to listen to their stories, get to know some of these addicts that have been saved by getting treatment. Go to "YouTube" and search Theemptychairshow. You will be amazed to hear their stories. They work so hard and we are so proud of each and every one of them. Now is the time for communities to be responsible for their own! In the future, our drug task force will be looking into

ways that local communities can learn about the process of finding and funding recovery housing.

I'm asking all of you who are interested in saving the lives of our children and young adults to please contact me. Also those of you who think I'm full of beans, please contact me. I don't expect to convince everyone, but I would like to hear from those of you who disagree. I believe I can learn a great deal from listening to people on the other side of the fence.

I would like to leave you with one last positive thought. The whole criminal justice system is taking a new approach to the war on drugs. Sheriff Cousins, Chief Joe Solomon, Judge Michael Brooks and so many others realize they are locking up the same individuals time after time. A majority of the people sent to jail are committing crimes to support their drug habit. People in the criminal justice system now know the best way to cut crime is not only punish them for the crime, but also get them some treatment so they will not continue to be repeat offenders. Oh by the way, it is significantly less expensive housing addicts in recovery than housing addicts in jail. Therefore, many in the system are pleading for more recovery beds.

Our drug task force for the Merrimack Valley meets every month. In addition to working toward getting more recovery homes, we will continue to educate ourselves and the public by offering information and resources to aid in the prevention of drug addiction.

We are a great group of people from all walks of life who belong to this task force. We invite all of you with an interest to become involved by joining our task force. All are welcome! Till next month.....

Phil Lahey is a former Methuen City Councilor and a former City Council President. He is the host of "the Empty Chair Show on Methuen Cable Access, you can email him at lahey2000@verizon.net.

The American Legion and Dealing with the VA

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

As we start to turn the corner to Spring (I HOPE!!) members of the American Legion and other veterans service organizations look to arrive in Washington, D.C. to discuss legislative issues with members of Congress.

I will report more on this in next month's issue.

I am often asked about the role of the American Legion in working with legislators at all levels. First, let me be clear that as an organization, the American Legion does not endorse any candidate(s) or political party.

As an individual, however, I do have the right to endorse and contribute to a candidate or political party.

The role of the American Legion member includes the following: to propagate an interest in and furthering the American Legion legislative goals, to serve as a medium for disseminating information to elected lawmakers, and to develop and maintain strong working relationships with elected lawmakers.

There are designated members who are the liaison with each member of Congress. In general, Legion members are encouraged to contact their elected officials with any concerns on legislation. This is best done through phone calls or emails.

There are two recent issues that I want to point out.

One is the Veterans Benefits Adminis-

tration (VBA), which is accused of obstructing the work of an American Legion team of experts during a recent visit to the Seattle, VA Regional Office.

Congressman Jeff Miller of Florida has sent a letter to Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), Eric Shinseki, expressing displeasure.

Congressman Miller is Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and will assign a committee staff member to accompany Legion teams on future visits. This is a process that has been going on for a number of years and, in the past the VA has welcomed Legion visits.

It has been suggested that some officials in the VA are upset with testimony at a

December congressional hearing where Legion staff members pointed out discrepancies in the VA, reporting 90 plus percent accuracy in processing claims.

The Legion staff noted that 55 percent of the claims they reviewed had errors.

I will note that Legion Service Officers are now working on over 700 thousand claims to help with the backlog. I will also note that the Legion works with all veterans, whether they are members of the Legion or not.

The second issue concerns an article written by Ruth Marcus in the February 11, 2014 edition of The Washington Post.

Ms. Marcus attacks the recent budget change giving back the military pension cuts. The American Legion National Commander, Dan Dellinger responded that one



Through all the awards, citations and honors we have received over the last 10 years, none mean more to us than those we get from veteran's organizations. This Public Service Award was presented by American Legion Commander John Lenotte (above right) at the Haverhill Korean War Memorial in June of 2008. Thank you John Lenotte for writing our American Legion column every month. Thank you as well to Air Force Sgt. Moore for bestowing upon us a Public Service Award in 2007, and The US Army 2nd Air Battalion, 1st Training Brigade for presenting us with an award in 2009. You are the real heroes.

needs to take into consideration the changing of geographic locations every few years which includes: uprooting children from their schools and friends, the military member being separated from family, and risking life and limb in a combat zone.

Can anyone really put a price tag on this?

What is the price of Freedom? Of protecting our citizens in a foreign land? Or, the price for someone who made the ultimate sacrifice?

On a local note, I saw what I thought were appalling numbers related to the high school graduation rates.

Look at the numbers for Lawrence and Haverhill.

It is no wonder that other nations are overtaking the US on the educational scale.

Although our colleges and universities

have large numbers of international students which speaks to the quality of that level of education, what is happening to our own students? Obviously the general population is accepting this status. I confess to having gone to high school MANY years ago. Dropouts were the exception, not the norm.

For these issues and many others, we as citizens need to make our voices heard in the ballot box this coming November. Please join me and VOTE!!!



John Lenotte, Commander, Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, , Haverhill MA; Past Commander, Department of Massachusetts, The American Legion; contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

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JERRY VALLEY: FROM PAGE 42

physicians come to me for stress reduction and other categories.

Now, we are pleased to introduce the exciting and dynamic method for permanent weight loss.....The Gastric Band procedure. This Non-surgical methodology is used in place of the actual surgery which is costly, invasive and can in some cases have many side effects. The other problem with the actual surgery is that, while the client can lose the weight, they, in many cases, regain the weight because their behavior towards food and their bodies has NOT been changed. With the hypnotic gastric band, the client subconsciously believes that a band has been placed around the top of the stomach and when that small pouch is satisfied, they stop eating. It is safe, inexpensive and no side effects. We have a very good number of clients who have lost a significant amount of weight....and they keep it off. Tommy Vee and I have been enjoying a 98% success rate over a 2 year period.

Let me explain why we do hypnosis shows and why we also work with clients in private sessions.

There have been so many opinions about stage hypnosis that I thought this would be a good time to clear some of the misconceptions and misleading comments. Please do not think that this is my platform for controversy but I only offer this article for your information only.

I have done both stage and "clinical" hypnosis for over 44 years and have never performed an "R" or "X" rated show. My son, Tommy Vee, a great stage hypnotist, and I have also worked successfully with thousands of clients as NGH Consulting Hypnotists in helping them improve their lives.

Very often, when Tommy does a local show, which is always clean and ethical, we get calls from people who become clients at our office in Methuen, Massachusetts. Because they were enthralled and fascinated by the experiments in the show, they became aware that possibly hypnosis could help them improve their lives. Hence, we increase our client base. When we are in other cities, like the Erie County Fair in Hamburg, NY, where over 80,000 people have seen my show, I always mention going to the local, NGH certified consulting hypnotist.....and a good number do just that. Some of my Alumni in the Buffalo area are very happy with



my suggestions to the audiences to seek help from these NGH certified consulting hypnotists. This is a perfect example that good stage shows actually enhance the practice of hypnosis by qualified and certified hypnotists.

Now, I concede that stage hypnosis is not for everyone just as consulting hypnosis is not for everyone. With that being said, I truly believe that stage shows are here to stay and, if done properly and ethically, they can help our profession attain greater status and acceptance by the general public and the medical profession as well.

In our office, we get many referrals from physicians, psychologists, therapists and other successful clients as well. We are not trying to change the entire world or to suggest that stage work is for all, but only to give all of us more good exposure to many individuals who are seeking alternative methodology to make beneficial changes in their lifestyles.

I also understand, and accept, that some very good consulting hypnotists will probably never condone stage shows, and that is fine. But, for those that feel this venue, done properly, just might be a good tool to enlighten the public, increase your client base and move our cause for acceptance forward, I say: "Try it...you might like it....my clients do."

Jerry Valley has performed over 10,000 shows worldwide. He is also an NGH certified hypnotherapist and has helped thousands of clients improve their lifestyles.... AN EXHILIRATING EXPERIENCE THAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET", You can contact Jerry at the Valley Hypnosis Center, 236 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA 01844, 978-688-6657. You can e-mail him at: jerryvalley007@aol.com.

BABIES AND BRIEFCASES

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESS START-UPS

Cheryl Hajjar

VALLEY PATRIOT MOMMY COLUMNIST

So you have an idea for a venture and everyone always tells you to go on Shark Tank. You're feeling empowered and think you are sitting on the next Google or the next Chipotle, but it may not be as easy as you think. According to the Small Business Association, more than 50% of all business fails within the first 5 years. But why? Well, the number one reason new start-ups fail is lack of experience. How do you get experience? Do you go back to school and get a business degree? Do you read a bunch of books on entrepreneurship and roll the dice?

Back in November, a friend of mine told me about the Merrimack Valley Sandbox Winter Accelerator grant program where they actually teach mentorship to individuals that have either a new business or just have ideas and concepts. They award a total of \$30,000 in cash and prizes to finalists who they feel accomplished the most during the program. So I decided to enter, and became a finalist. For the next 12 weeks I attended classes, workshops and had regular mentor meetings to "accelerate" my business. It has been one of the greatest opportunities myself and my business, the Indigo Pixies, has had. Goal setting, revenue projections and selected speakers on various topics were some of the things included in the curriculum. I feel like I received a mini MBA; it was so intense and the networking opportunities that we have because of the Sandbox will make the difference between succeeding and failing.

The Sandbox's goals are to boost the economic and social well-being of greater Lowell and Lawrence by advancing entrepreneurship and innovation. In a nutshell, they teach you all of the tools you need to make your business successful whatever it may be, and their number of success rates so far has been exceedingly high. More than 90% of all individuals who graduated from the program are thriving in their businesses. Not only do they have the Accelerator program but they have several smaller pitch contests where individuals can win smaller amounts to help with



costs such as marketing or buying a new computer.

The Sandbox All Ideas Welcome Pitch Contest is one of their opportunities that either a business or a non-profit can enter. They are giving thousands of dollars in cash & prizes & feedback from industry professionals. The deadline to apply is March 13th at midnight. Go to MVSandbox.org/Pitch for details.

So how else can you help your business to be successful? Networking with your community and letting everyone know where your business is and how your services can help them is another way to promote your success. Getting involved with networking groups and advertising in your local newspaper is a great way to promote yourself.

One of the things I really love about The Valley Patriot is that local business owners such as myself (and others), really support each other.

This year is The Valley Patriot's 10th year anniversary of being in business and the timing couldn't be better to align yourself with the most trusted source of local news. It is on the cutting edge of journalism and provides great advertising rates for start up businesses.

More importantly, is getting involved with other businesses in the area through The Valley Patriot. Cross promotions are great as well. With nearly 40 communities in its delivery, there is no better way to gain more exposure for your business. If you have a start up and are looking for ways to help it grow, contact me at: biesn-briefcases@gmail.com

Cheryl Hajjar, CEO & Co-Founder, Indigo Magic, 1 (910)-7-pixies, www.indigopixies.com

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Photo top left: Portuguese Club President Daniel Melo with Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera. Middle Photo: State Rep. Marcos Deves, Lawrence Mayor Rivera, City Councilor Estella Reyes, State Rep. Frank Moran, Will Carpenter of the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, Portuguese Club President Daniel Melo, The Consulate General of Portugal, and State Senator Barry Finegold. Photo top right: Dan Melo with the Consulate General. Photo at Left: Louie Soares, Vice President of the Portuguese Club, State Representative Diana DiZoglio, and Club President Daniel Melo.

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Every time I pick up The Valley Patriot I just have to shake my head and laugh. Each month you guys out-do yourselves with breaking news, commentary and information. Thank you Tom, Chuck and Ralph for coming onto the scene with objective investigations, important exposés and biting editorials that don't candy coat the issues!

Congratulations on your FIRST Ten Years!

Former State Senator Steve Baddour



PAYING ATTENTION: FROM 15

readers in the special edition because, a) if you don't follow us on line you are really missing out, and b) I wanted to give you an idea just how impossible it would be for me name and thank everyone involved in what we do here every day.

The success of this newspaper over the last ten years is a great testament to you; those of you who read and advertise with us every month, those of you who feed us critical documents or information, (usually at the risk of losing your jobs), and those of you who drop what you are doing to pitch in and help at the exact time you are needed the most.

I CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE BUT YOU CAN

When North Andover High School Volleyball Captain Erin Cox finally appeared in Lawrence District Court (with a hand written confession), just weeks after famed attorney Wendy Murphy went on national TV stating Cox was never charged with underage drinking ... you guys, our readers, spotted her the second she walked in the courthouse doors, and once again, the text messages came pouring in.

Erin Cox wasn't given a free pass by Boxford Police the night she was drinking at an underage party, as was reported. She had simply changed the date of her court appearance so it would look that way.

What Erin Cox and Wendy Murphy weren't counting on was you. YOU called out the phony Erin Cox story with your text messages, emails and phone calls. I was only the vehicle you chose to get the word out. Thank you for that.

This month our newspaper celebrates ten years in the publishing business. We also celebrate how lucky we are to have the efforts and the backing of so many people who have made this milestone possible. Our



Malden Taxi Driver Jim Duggan drove the Muslim terrorists through Boston the night before the marathon bombing

success is your success. Now just imagine what we can accomplish in the next ten years as our network continues to grow.

Thank you. All of you. No matter how big or small your contribution, our celebration this month is really about you!



Tom Duggan is the publisher of The Valley Patriot, a former Lawrence School Committeeman, and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP, 980AM, every Saturday from 10am-noon. You can email your comments to valleypatriot@aol.com .

Public Records Law Bill #2846: It Should Matter to Everyone!

Gracemarie & Joyce Tomaselli
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST SUBMISSION

We want people to understand the importance of this law. You see, it is too late when you find out that you can't get the public documents that you desperately need. Right now if a municipality doesn't provide you with a document or provides you with documents that you didn't ask for, they do not have a penalty. Some municipalities do this because they know they can. They are a lot like naughty little children who play "you can't catch me. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

The municipality is required to reply to your request in 10 days, but if they don't, they do not get a penalty.

The Secretary of State tries their best to help get the documents that you requested but since there is no penalty, the municipality can just ignore your request. (Not all municipalities do, but some do.)

The town's violation of not providing us with the very important information that we have been seeking for many years has cost us thousands of dollars in legal

fees and possibly our home. The simple request we made was for the town's vote to construct the sewer project that was completed before we bought our property. You would think that a municipality would just provide this permanent record, but this is not how it works in real life. The Town has never provided us with this vote. It took us over 10 years to get the right answer which came from the EPA documents. At last, we got it!

The town's failure to answer questions and provide documents has contributed to the town taking our home and has cost the innocent and trusting people in Salisbury millions of dollars for a project that had no cost to them.

Contributing to this problem is the fact that NO agency oversees municipalities. Salisbury's attorney said to us in Court "I told you we (town) can do what we want to do!"

We support you 100% in getting the public records law approved. Everyone should. Please call your state representative or state senator and tell them to support H2846.

he didn't have to do. He was able to formulate a plan and bring it to a successful conclusion. For reasons like that I think he should be nominated... on the other hand he broke every rule in the city... but that's Frank." the chief concluded to laughter from the crowd.

After posing for photos, Skusevich commandeered the microphone in a move unprecedented at the annual award dinner and thanked the room and his colleagues as if he were accepting an award at the Oscars to the delight of the crowd.

Scott Emerson of Wheelabrator Technologies in North Andover finally receives his Valley Patriot Officer Tom Duggan Senior Law Enforcement Award for his service and commitment to honoring police officers and firefighters in the Merrimack Valley. The Tom Duggan Law Enforcement Award is given to two recipients each year at our annual BASH. Mr. Emerson could not attend in 2013 and we finally caught up to him last month to present his award at the offices of Wheelabrator. Emerson and Wheelabrator sponsor the Lawrence Exchange Club's Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards each year at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover. Methuen Police Officer Macdonald also won this award in 2013. This year's award recipients will be announced at the 10th Anniversary BASH on March 21st at the Lawrence Firefighter's Relief In, 1 Market Street at 7pm. See page 3 for details.



Public Records From Page 19

account the actual cost of materials used, an amount equal to the hourly salary of the lowest paid employee with the skill needed to complete the request, provided that no fee shall be charged unless at least 2 hours is needed to prepare the copy of the record. In addition, When the custodian has to engage an outside service to prepare a copy because the technology available is inadequate, the custodian may only charge the actual cost of the preparation, provided that no fee may exceed the hourly salary of the lowest paid state employee who can provide the service. Fees for black and white photocopies or computer printouts can be no more than 5 cents per letter size and 7 cents per larger page. Every custodian shall inform the requester of the cost of preparing the copy. Permits the custodian to waive fees when it is in the public interest.

Section 6. Establishes that court proceedings under this section will take precedence on the docket over other civil cases. In addition, the court shall award attorneys fees when the party seeking public records substantially prevails. A settlement in the plaintiff's favor is not required if the court determines that the defendant's case lacked a basis in fact or was not in good faith.

Section 7. Amends section 10 of chapter 66 to insert 3 new paragraphs.

(e) requires custodians to make public records which are available in electronic form available to the requester in said form. The custodian shall provide the record in any format requested if the record is readily reproducible in that format. If the request does not specify electronic format than the custodian shall provide the record in a common format that is reasonably usable. A custodian may only charge the actual cost of materials provided in electronic form.

When the custodian has to engage an outside service to prepare a copy because the technology available is inadequate, the custodian may only charge the actual cost of the preparation, provided that no fee may exceed the hourly salary of the low-

est paid state employee who can provide the service. Any programming needed to retrieve a record or to provide a record in a requested format may not be deemed preparation or creation of a new record.

(f) directs every agency with the ability to do so provide public records at no charge through public internet access. A custodian state agency shall be required to provide free internet access to public records in the case of (i) final opinions, decisions, orders or votes from agency proceedings; (ii) annual reports; (iii) reports to the General court; (iv) notices of regulations proposed under chapter 30A; (v) notices of hearings; (vi) winning bids for public contracts and (vii) any public record information of significant interest to the general public.

(g) directs the secretary of each executive office to promulgate rules and regulations by October 1, 2014 to carry out the requirements of the act. The constitutional offices shall also adopt regulations by October 1, 2014.

Section 8. Establishes a special legislative commission comprised of members of both the House and Senate to study the availability to the general public of information concerning the legislative operations of the general court. The commission shall examine procedures and practices of both the House and Senate and their committees regarding among other matters, scheduling and hearing notification, public agendas, public testimony and committee votes. In addition the commission shall study the publication of legislative records involving session, roll court votes and other matters. Furthermore, a study of best practices in other states and in Congress shall be reviewed.

The commission may as needed partner with outside groups including, but not limited to the ACLU, Common Cause, and other groups.

The commission shall convene within 45 days of the passage of the Act and shall report its findings together with any legislation by October 1, 2014.

SKI: FROM PAGE 20

the radio] and had gone to the boating program in Lawrence and surprised this poor gentleman who was working on the boats at the dock, commandeered a boat, almost cost the guy to lose his job, and he is coming down river... in the prow of the boat just like in one of those old movies."

Skusevich pulled a 72 year old man into the boat from the cold water and brought him to shore.

I put him up for the commendation, as did former Chief Bergeron, more for the fact that he used his own volition and he really thought this thing out. He did what

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